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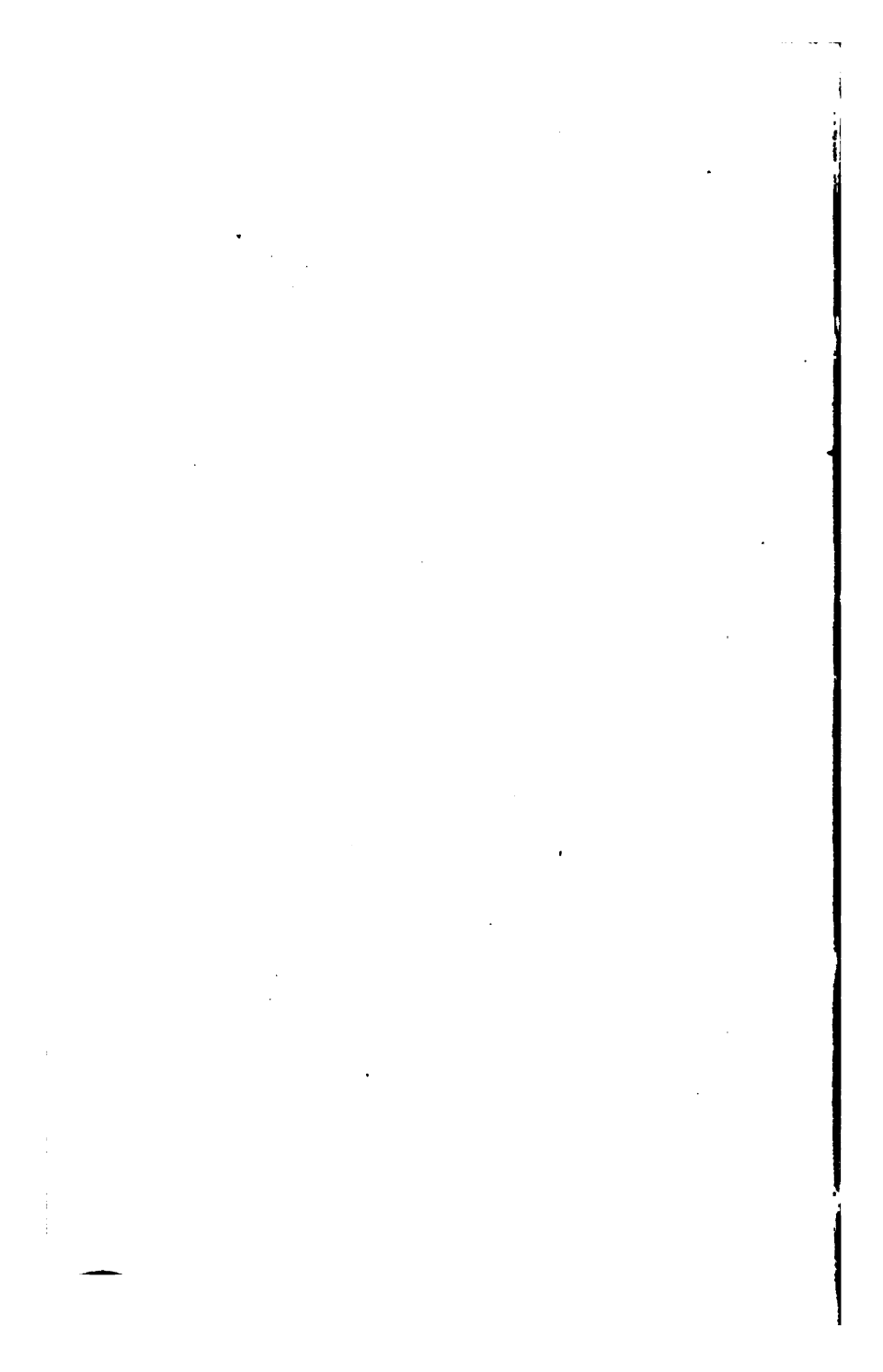
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1851



Stephen Eaton.

828
S949N





Mrs. Arabella Jane Sullivan

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A CHAPERON.



EDITED BY LADY DACRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)

1833.



ELLEN WAREHAM.

Calantha.—Away, away, call not such passion love !
A man so loves his horse, his hound, his hawk,
For that these things to's pleasure minister ;
He 's proud to boast such peerless beauty his—
Does gloat upon it—would have others gaze,
And pine with envy. What 's this but self-love ?
Now mark, Antenor ! He who loves indeed,
With his whole soul ! His study but to honour
His lady's name an hundred thousand ways !
His sole joy, her contentment ; and sole sorrow,
Her disquiet. He with true devotion
Approaches her, as something pure and holy,
His bright incentive to high deeds. The beacon
To light his path to virtue and to fame !

Old Manuscript Play.

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ELLEN WAREHAM.

CHAPTER I.

Ten amor el arco quedo
Que soy niña y tengo miedo.

Spanish Romance.

IN a small but neat drawing-room, in the principal town of ——shire, Captain Wareham and his family were assembled at breakfast. Captain Wareham himself was sitting with the newspaper in his hand, his back half-turned to the breakfast-table, and his feet resting on the fender; Caroline, his eldest daughter, was presiding over the tea-pot; Ellen, the second, was patiently waiting till the tea *had brewed*; the two elder boys were

kicking at each other's legs under the table; the youngest daughter was strumming away at a most unmusical piano-forte; and the youngest boy was amusing himself by adorning the slate, on which he was supposed to be doing a sum, with specimens of the graphic art, in the shape of helmeted knights and galloping war-horses.

"Caroline," said Captain Wareham, "do not give me water bewitched, by way of tea, this morning, I entreat!"

"I hope it will be good, papa: the water does boil to-day."

Captain Wareham took his tea, and having added the cream and sugar, tasted it.

"Caroline, you have let the tea stand too long! You know I hate it when it gets that rough disagreeable taste."

"Shall I put in a little water, papa? It is very easy to make it weaker."

"No! there is no use in doing that. If the tea is once too strong, you cannot make it right by adding water.—Give me the toast."

Ellen handed him the toast.

"It is all cold and tough. I cannot eat it!"

"It has been here so long, dear papa; but you were so busy with the newspaper, I did not like to interrupt you."

"You know I hate cold toast!"

"Shall I ring, and ask for some more?"

"Ask for more! I never can teach any of my children, that people who are poor must conform to their means. One would think I was made of gold, to hear the wasteful manner in which you talk!"

"Shall I toast it afresh, papa?" interrupted Ellen; "that will make it almost as good as ever again."

"No, no! be quiet, child. How you pester me! Do you not see I am reading the newspaper? There is no possibility of understanding a word one reads, you all keep up such a clatter!"

George, who all this time had continued his attempts to reach Henry's feet, as they sat at opposite ends of the table, at length gave it a tremendous shake.

"Do be quiet, boys!" exclaimed Captain

Wareham, in a voice of thunder; "and do stop that eternal strumming at the piano-forte—give one some peace, Matilda!"

Matilda, delighted to be released, jumped up from her half-finished tune, and ran to assist James in his labours at the slate.

"Caroline, why do you set Matilda to practise just at breakfast-time?"

"Why, papa, you said Miss Patterson was to come at ten o'clock for the future; and you said Matilda should practise an hour before she came; so I did not very well know how to help it."

"Nonsense! You always contrive to do the disagreeable thing."

He turned round, and was again absorbed in the important intelligence contained in the newspaper; for at that time Buonaparte had just returned from Egypt, and the proceedings in France were watched by all Europe with intense anxiety and interest. The second dish of tea remained by his side, untasted.

After about a quarter of an hour, he turned angrily to Caroline, saying:

"Why on earth do you not send away the breakfast things? Nothing shortens the day so much, as letting the breakfast remain late upon the table—this is another thing I can never teach you!"

"I thought you might wish to drink your tea, papa," answered Caroline, timidly.

"I do not want any more; it is so horridly bad!" he replied. "And now, I suppose, we must have the weekly bills, and I must give you some money!"

Caroline's spirit sank within her. The first Monday in every month was to her a weary day; and she anticipated that this would indeed be black Monday, as papa did not seem to be quite well.

The apparatus for the morning repast was removed. Caroline brought the household book, and the bills, and presented them, one by one, to her father, who was horrified at the amount of each.

"Why, here is beef again!—there is no occasion to feed the whole family on beef! If the servants have their beef on Sunday, surely that is enough. You know, Caroline,

I can scarcely afford to live as I do, and yet it seems you become every day more expensive in your housekeeping."

"I am very sorry, papa, but you told me to have some luncheon in case the Jenkinsons called last Wednesday; and you have often said you hated cold mutton, and that it was painful to you that any one should imagine you were inhospitable; and I thought it did not make much difference, and there would be the cold beef, which always looks handsome."

"So, I suppose you mean to imply it is my fault that the bills are high. I am sure no man can spend less upon himself than I do! I wish you would tell me where to get the money, that is all!"

The entrance of Miss Patterson, a prim, middle-aged lady, who came for a few hours every day to superintend Matilda's education, put an end to the discussion. Captain Wareham paid the money without another word, took his hat and stick, and sallied forth to avoid the infliction of Miss Patterson, the music, &c.

Captain Wareham was a half-pay officer,

with a broken constitution, and a very limited income. He had taken up his abode in the county town, that his eldest daughter might have the advantage of going to the winter balls; his second, that of receiving some finishing lessons in singing from the organist of the Cathedral; his third, that of having a day-governess; and his youngest boy that of attending an excellent school, as a day scholar.

He was a dignified-looking man, very tall and thin, with a high pale forehead, light eyes and hair, and there was altogether something melancholy and gentlemanly in his appearance. His connexions were good, his conduct irreproachable, and he maintained an uncomplaining reserve upon the subject of his pecuniary embarrassments, which gained him the respect and consideration of the surrounding squirearchy. Whether his difficulties on the score of money might not be the true cause of the captious temper which rendered his home any thing but a happy one, either to himself or to his family, is another question. In society he was courteous and polished, his daughters

were gentle and dutiful, and although among the gossip of a country town an unauthenticated rumour now and then prevailed that Captain Wareham was a tyrant at home, he upon the whole bore the character of an exemplary man.

Mrs. Wareham had died just as her eldest daughter had attained the age of womanhood, and upon her death the care of the younger children devolved upon Caroline. Caroline was by nature indolent and sweet-tempered. It was to her a most wearisome duty to inspect the bills, and to see that the lessons were prepared by the time the day governess arrived. She was pretty, and her very indolence gave her something fashionable in manner,—at least it prevented any thing approaching a bustling fussiness, which is in itself essentially vulgar. She was much admired by the beaux of the neighbourhood, though there is a vast difference between admiring, and proposing to, a pretty pennyless girl.

As she considered marriage the one and only means of escaping from a home and mode of life exceedingly distasteful to her, she did not discourage the admiration of those who paid

her any attention. Several had appeared to be deeply smitten, but still the magic words upon which her future fate rested, had never passed their lips, and she was gradually becoming hopeless and distrustful. Her second sister, Ellen, was now seventeen, and was to make her appearance at the next county ball.

On the morning after our opening scene, Captain Wareham was returning from his usual stroll, when, as he mounted the steps, a neat little damsel, with a milliner's wicker basket on her arm, tripped lightly down them; dropping a graceful coquettish curtsy as she passed. Captain Wareham wore a discontented aspect as he entered the drawing-room. "Caroline, was not that Miss Simperkin's girl whom I met at the door?"

"Yes, papa, she has been trying on Ellen's ball-dress for to-morrow night."

"And so you run me up bills at the milliner's, do you?"

"This is Ellen's first ball, papa," answered Caroline, in a deprecating tone, "and you know you are always annoyed if I do not look as nice as other girls, and so I thought you would

wish Ellen to make a favourable impression at first. I have the beautiful gauze my aunt gave me, and I felt sure you would not like to see Ellen less well-dressed than me."

"Ah, well! I suppose it cannot be helped. I do not wish people to pity you for being shabbily dressed. I hate to be pitied."

At this moment a carriage and four drove up to the door. Ellen ran to the window.

"Oh, Caroline! it is Lady Besville and her daughters: run and take off that black apron. Dear me! the room is all in confusion with Matilda's lesson-books. There, put away the slate, and the back-board."

Ellen inherited something of her father's sensitiveness to the *qu'en dira-t-on* of the world.

"I wish it was summer," whispered Caroline, "or that papa could afford us two fires."

The room was rendered tolerably tidy for the reception of Lady Besville, who always paid an annual visit to the Wareham family, although she was not in the habit of visiting the other country town gentry. It was a sort of tribute to the respectability of their conduct, and of their connexions.

Lady Besville was duly astonished at Matilda's growth, she admired the stoutness of James, asked Ellen if she enjoyed the thoughts of her first ball, and said all the sweet little nothings which are civilities and attentions, from the great to the little.

Captain Wareham pressed some luncheon upon her Ladyship;—she owned she was very hungry, having had a long drive. Captain Wareham rang the bell with a vigorous pull, as if he felt assured a sumptuous repast only waited to be sent for, and, in an easy and confident tone, desired the one footman, (who, if it had not been for his plush breeches and white stockings, would have been a foot-boy,) to bring the luncheon.

Caroline knew the servants had just devoured the last morsel of cold meat: she saw the look of blank dismay with which her father's order was received by John, and she sat uneasily in her chair wondering what would happen. She could not leave the room,—it would look so odd; and she scarcely knew whether to rejoice, or to grieve, when she saw her father depart, ostensibly in search of a pamphlet on the times,

which he particularly recommended to Lord Besville's perusal, but in fact, as Caroline believed, to take some energetic measures upon the subject of luncheon. She dreaded his coming to the knowledge of the unprovided state of the larder, and, on the other hand, she equally dreaded having her housekeeping brought to utter shame before strangers. Poor Caroline! she was not by nature a manager. She was meek and gentle, and, perhaps, if she had not been frightened, might have succeeded as well as her neighbours, but she always felt she should do wrong, and never ventured to do right. There is a certain portion of decision necessary even in the ordering of dinner, and choosing between a leg of mutton, and a shoulder.

Captain Wareham, after a small delay, returned with the pamphlet, and he conversed with fluency and eagerness upon its contents. Ellen, meanwhile, had become tolerably intimate with Lady Harriet, who was also to make her first appearance at the approaching ball; and Caroline listened with a face expressive of much interest to the discussion upon the fates of nations, while she secretly

revolved in her mind what would be the cook's resource in this unforeseen exigency. The half hour which thus elapsed seemed to her interminable: she thought Lady Besville would be quite tired of waiting, and she saw her begin to fidget on her chair, and to look towards the window.

At this critical juncture Caroline heard the jingle of one glass against another, as John mounted the stairs. This delightful promise of a forthcoming repast of some sort or another, was to her ears, as the horn of a German post-boy when he approaches the town, to the benighted traveller, or as the tinkling of the camel-bells of a caravan, to a solitary pilgrim in the desert.

The door opened — the tray entered — Caroline cast a trembling furtive glance: to her delight and astonishment, she beheld a tongue, a fowl, a dish of puffs, some cakes, some fruit, and wine. She breathed more freely, and performed her part of hostess with ease and quietness. The Besvilles did ample justice to the meal, and departed impressed with the comfortable and respectable

manner in which Captain Wareham lived, the good-breeding of Caroline, and the good-humour and liveliness of her father.

But Caroline's troubles were to come. Captain Wareham reproached her for having no cold meat, and told her how he had been obliged to send, in one direction, to the eating-house to buy a cold fowl at twice its value—to the pastry-cook for some puffs—to the fruiterer's for some fruit, to conceal her bad housekeeping. "You would not have people go away from one's house hungry, would you? Though I am poor, I cannot submit to that."

Caroline knew that to remind him of what he had said the day before, would only increase his wrath, and she bore it in unreplying meekness, while she secretly wondered whether Mr. Weston was likely to be more serious in his attentions, than Major Barton had proved.

The momentous evening arrived: Captain Wareham looked with paternal pride at his two daughters as he led them into the ball-

room — the fair and delicate Caroline, with her small but beautifully rounded form, her regular features, and her alabaster skin,—and the tall and sylph-like Ellen, whose beauty was of a loftier character. Her straight and clearly-defined eyebrows, her broad white forehead, and her noble cast of countenance, were softened and subdued by a pensive grace which rendered her appearance as interesting, as it was striking. The full white eyelids were fringed with long and black eye-lashes which almost swept her cheeks; and when she raised those eyes, there was a liquid lustre in the depth of their dark blue, which might have found its way to the coldest heart.

Mr. Cresford, a young and wealthy London merchant, was not one whose coldness rendered him proof against these same eyes. On the contrary, he was an impassioned and impetuous youth, who fell in love with Ellen at first sight, danced with her all night, sat by her at supper, and never left her side till he had handed her to her carriage.

The next morning the sisters were pre-

paring to take their accustomed exercise, and Ellen had put on her common straw bonnet, when Caroline remonstrated.

“It is quite fine—you may just as well wear your Sunday bonnet to-day.”

“This will do very well for the garden. I promised Will Pollard to help him to pot the geraniums for the winter.”

“Surely, Ellen, you are not going to poke about in our little confined garden. Do let us walk into the town. There are all the people we met at the ball last night; we shall be sure to see some of them.”

“But I promised the gardener to help him. You know papa cannot afford to have him more than three days in the week, and if we do not assist him a little, the garden can never look nice.”

“Any other day will do just as well for your gardening. Now do, dear Ellen, let us take a good long walk, it will refresh us after the ball. I never knew you unwilling to oblige anybody before. Besides I must go to the shop to buy some things for George, before he

returns to school; and I want you to help me. It is so difficult to give poor papa satisfaction. I am sure I do my very best, but I do get so wearied, and so worried at home, what with the housekeeping, and the lessons, and having to keep the boys' things in order, and never being able to do any thing right, that I want a little relaxation."

Ellen yielded, for she often pitied Caroline, who was decidedly not made for the lot which had befallen her. She put on her best bonnet, and the three sisters sallied forth. From the shop they walked along the river side, under the shade of some spreading elms, which made this terrace the favourite resort of the inhabitants of ——. They had not long been there before Mr. Cresford joined them.

He walked by Ellen's side, and any acute observer might have perceived, by the obsequious air, the flushed cheek, and the agitation of his whole demeanour, that his was not a common-place flirtation to kill an idle morning, but that his feelings were deeply interested. Ellen was shy and reserved, but

her reserve only increased the ardour of the passion which had so suddenly been awakened in his breast.

The next day Ellen could not be persuaded to extend their walk beyond their own garden.

"When Mr. Cresford is gone away, Caroline, we will walk wherever you please, but I do not like appearing to seek him."

"Why do you dislike him? He is evidently smitten with you."

"I do not dislike him particularly, but I think I am more comfortable and happy, gardening with Will Pollard; and if I liked to meet him ever so much, I had rather die than appear to seek him, or any body else."

"So would I, Ellen!" cried little Matilda, "when I grow up, I will be so proud! it shall never be said that I care for anybody."

"I am sure I should be sorry to do any thing forward," answered Caroline, "only one must take the air sometimes. Perhaps, however, you are both right, and I am sure I would not have any girl care for any man, till she is quite sure of him, and it is very difficult to know when they are in earnest."

CHAPTER II.

Cleanthes—She'll be a castaway—my life upon't.

Hermione—Man argues from his fiercer will, nor knows

True virtue's quality in woman's breast.

My daughter, Sir, is virtuous, and virtue

Will to herself subdue e'en rebel Nature.

Had she been linked in love with one her choice,

She had been all soul, following her wedded lord

Through life's worst perils, frankly, fearlessly ;

But matched, ere yet her young heart spoke, with one

She cannot love, she'll give her love to duty,

And cheerful, although passionless, perform it

Calmly, contentedly, nor ever dream

Of joys she must not know, and so pass on

Into the quiet grave. *Old Manuscript Play.*

MR. CRESFORD soon found some excuse for calling upon Captain Wareham, and in the course of his visit contrived to give himself a commission to execute, which justified another visit, another and another.

Captain Wareham thought the symptoms

were auspicious, and entertained some hope of honourably disposing of one daughter in marriage, but Caroline, profiting by her own experience, warned Ellen not to place any reliance on these signs of preference.

“ You do not know the world yet, Ellen,” she said ; “ you do not know how often the same sort of thing has happened to me. Remember Major Barton last winter, and poor Mr. Astell, (however, I do think he would have proposed if he had lived.) Talk to Mr. Cresford as much as you please, for, as my aunt says, ‘ nothing can come of nothing,’ but do not let yourself like him, till he has actually proposed. Remember what I have already told you, a woman cannot guess whether a man is in earnest or not, till he does propose.”

Ellen thought her sister was very prudent and sensible, and she resolved to follow her advice. Nor did she find the task a difficult one.

Mr. Cresford, although handsome, was not pleasing, and the very vehemence of his love rather alarmed and confused the young Ellen.

This was the season of gaiety at —, and there were frequent dinners and parties among the canons and prebends. Caroline regularly asked Ellen every night, whether Mr. Cresford had proposed, and for ten days Ellen answered, "No, not quite." Caroline continued her warnings, and Ellen her watch over her heart.

At length Mr. Cresford waited one morning upon Captain Wareham, and in good set terms asked him for his daughter's hand. Captain Wareham accepted his proposal, and informed Ellen of the event.

There did not seem to exist a doubt in any of their minds as to what her answer would be. The whole question had been from the beginning, whether or not he would come to the point, and the lady's privilege of saying no, seemed in that family to be utterly forgotten. Ellen was too young and too timid to discover it for herself, and she found herself the affianced wife of a man, whom a fortnight before she had never seen, and whom, during that fortnight, she had been taking care not to prefer.

The affair was decided. The lover was all rapture — Captain Wareham all satisfaction — Caroline all surprise that Mr. Cresford should have behaved in so gentlemanlike a manner, not keeping her sister in any uncertainty, but setting her mind at ease at once. She was too good-natured and too affectionate, to feel any thing like envy, but she wished Captain Barton had behaved in the same noble manner to her.

Ellen was surprised not to find herself happier on so quickly arriving at that result, which had been the object of her sister's wishes for six years and a half. But she was afraid of Mr. Cresford. He was easily hurt, easily offended, he was expecting, and jealous ; he would not allow her to go to any more of the balls ; he scarcely liked to see her acknowledge, much less shake hands with, any of her former acquaintance. Ellen was subdued, rather than elated, by her approaching nuptials. Caroline one day remarked upon her unusual seriousness, and asked her if she and Mr. Cresford had not had a lovers' quarrel.

" Oh, no," replied Ellen, " but it is difficult

you know, sister, to love a person all at once, particularly when one has been trying not to like him at all. However, I dare say I shall soon, when I am more accustomed to him. It is not easy to do just right, for a girl is not to like a man till he proposes, and then she ought to love him very much as soon as ever she is going to be married to him."

Mr. Cresford was the only son of wealthy parents, and was accustomed to find his wishes laws to those around him. His father had died when he was barely twenty-one, and had left him at the head of a thriving mercantile house.

He fell in love with Ellen at first sight,—he proposed at once, had been accepted, and, following the course of his own impetuous passions, was now eager that the wedding-day should be fixed. Captain Wareham had no wish to postpone it, and in three weeks more Ellen left the paternal roof as the wife of Mr. Cresford.

She was astounded and confused at the whole thing; she had not been allowed time to become attached to him, even if he had been all a maiden's imagination could picture in its

happiest day-dream. But there was a want of refinement in the headlong course of his love, a want of consideration ; in fact, there was a selfishness, which did not win its way to the heart of a very modest, very young, and very sensitive girl.

In London she found herself surrounded by all the luxuries of life. She had an excellent house, a handsome equipage. He showered presents upon her—jewels and trinkets without number,—each new ornament daily invented to satisfy the caprice of the idle and the wealthy. His delight was to see his lovely bride's beauty set off to the utmost advantage. But she must be decked out for him alone ; he was annoyed if any other eyes seemed to dwell with gratification upon the loveliness which he had taken such pleasure in adorning.

Cresford had a large circle of acquaintance, not, perhaps, in the first style of fashion, but among gentlemanlike and agreeable people. Persons with intellects as well cultivated, minds as refined, manners as essentially well-bred, as can be found in the highest coteries, though perhaps one of the initiated might per-

ceive the want of that nameless grace which more than compensates for a certain coldness frequently pervading the most select *réunions*. The very fashionable are exceedingly afraid of each other. They may sometimes have been accused of insolence towards those whom they consider in a grade below themselves, but their worst enemies cannot say they do not stand in awe of each other. There was in Ellen a gentle dignity, which, combined with her extraordinary beauty, would have caused her to be distinguished in any society: of course, therefore, in this she could not but excite notice and admiration. Yet proud as Cresford was of her, anxious as he was to show to the world how lovely was the bride he had chosen for himself, he never returned from a party or an assembly without a cloud on his brow, and something restless and suspicious in his manner.

She began to fear he was constitutionally jealous. Others came to the same conclusion. Young men in all ranks of life find peculiar pleasure in tormenting a jealous husband; and not all the shrinking modesty of Ellen's manners could prevent their openly showing the

admiration they felt. She hoped, by the extreme quietness of her behaviour, to give him no cause for disquiet ; but though she might avoid affording him any opportunity of blaming her, she could not prevent his being irritable and violent whenever they had mixed in any society.

She would gladly have led a very retired life, she would fain have dressed herself in a homely and unpretending style,—her whole object was to escape notice : but such was the nature of his love for her, that he was not satisfied unless her charms were set off by every ornament ; and his fear of being laughed at was such, that he would not give occasion for saying he shut up his beautiful wife. Ellen was consequently obliged to mix in the world, and she learned to set a strict watch over her very looks, and to be tremblingly alive to the *on dits* of society. She, as well as her sister Caroline, was timid in her nature ; she was, moreover, shy and reserved upon all subjects connected with the feelings, and she dreaded lest his jealous fancies should ever openly burst forth, and bring blame or ridicule on

either of them. She had at times stood in awe of her father, but the fear she felt of her husband was more constant and unceasing.

Still she had been accustomed to humour and to yield to a captious temper, and she considered that it was the lot of women to bear with the caprices of men. She frequently reminded herself of the gratitude she was bound to feel towards him, for having taken her portionless from her father, and for the unbounded command of money which he allowed her. She excused his jealousy on account of the passionate love he evinced for her, and she concluded the two feelings were necessarily inseparable.

His generosity on the subject of money afforded her one great pleasure, that of making various presents to her sisters, and of assisting her family in divers manners. He took her eldest brother into his mercantile establishment, and she rejoiced in having thus been the means of relieving her father from one care which pressed most heavily upon his mind.

They had been married about four years, and Ellen was the mother of two lovely chil-

dren, when the peace concluded between France and England, at the period when Buonaparte was First Consul, enabled the English to flock abroad. To Mr. Cresford it was a matter of great importance to conclude some arrangement with foreign merchants. For this purpose he made up his mind to leave his wife for a month or two.

It was, however, most unwillingly that he tore himself away : it seemed as if some presentiment warned him not to depart. He postponed his journey from day to day, from week to week. At length his correspondents became impatient, and the day was fixed. He took Ellen and his children to reside with Captain Wareham during his absence, and she willingly promised to live in the strictest seclusion till his return ; but it was with a melancholy foreboding that he bade her adieu, and he returned again and again to take one more last lingering look at her beautiful face, as though he felt he might never again thus gaze on it.

CHAPTER III.

— Love's sooner felt than seen :

Oft in a voice he creeps down through the ear ;

Oft from a blushing cheek he lights his fire ;

Oft shrouds his golden flame in likest hair ;

Oft in a soft, smooth cheek doth close retire ;

Oft in a smile, oft in a silent tear ;

And if all fail, yet virtue's self will lure !

PHINEAS FLETCHER.

CAROLINE was now seven-and-twenty, and she had many histories to pour into Ellen's ear of the deceitful conduct of sundry naval or military heroes, and briefless barristers. One old nabob had laid his fortune at her feet, but he was too disagreeable, and she preferred even the eternal household bills, and the last finish of Matilda's education, and the in-

creased peevishness of her father's temper, to being the wife of Mr. Pierson.

But there was a person—a most amiable man—a clergyman, who had long appeared to prefer her—who did not pay her compliments, but who often visited them in their quiet home, and who admired her for qualities which had never attracted the notice of the captains nor the majors—her patience, her sweet temper, and her absence of selfishness. She owned to Ellen that, if circumstances ever enabled him to come forward, she should rejoice in the chances which had prevented her marrying earlier.

In the course of a short time Ellen had an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with Mr. Allenham, and she thought her sister would indeed be a fortunate woman if she should ever become his wife.

To Ellen his intentions seemed manifest; but Caroline, who had so often been deceived, scarcely ventured to believe what she so much wished: all pleasure in the society of others was, however, completely gone, and she sighed to fix the affections which had so long

been without a resting-place, upon a person for whom she could feel entire respect, and in whom she could place complete reliance. Caroline was now as little inclined to mix in the world as Ellen, and Mr. Cresford would have been satisfied, if he could have witnessed the retirement in which they lived.

He had not been gone more than a month, when the sudden renewal of hostilities gave rise to the greatest alarm among those who had friends upon the Continent. Still, no one was prepared for that gross violation of all the usual courtesies between civilized nations, of all the charities of human life, which astounded the European world, when Buonaparte detained the harmless traveller, the peaceable merchant, and doomed them to drag out the best years of their lives in weary, unprofitable imprisonment at Verdun, or in the fortress of La Bitche.

At first, no one could believe that this would last; they all looked to a speedy termination of their captivity. Ellen received letters from her husband, who was among the *detenus* at Verdun, which filled her with pity and alarm. His jealousy, which could not

be completely lulled when his virtuous and modest wife was constantly under his own eye, now raged like a devouring flame. He threatened to commit some crime which could only be atoned by his life, rather than endure the living death which consumed him. He braved the authorities—he would not accept his parole—he would not preclude himself from attempting every means in his power to again see the wife whom he adored. His letters were written in a state of mind bordering on distraction. In vain Ellen described to him her quiet mode of existence, entreated him to wait with patience till he could return in health and safety to his family, and promised faithfully to continue in the seclusion which he had prescribed. She communicated to him her intention of taking a cottage near her father and sisters, where the children might have the benefit of country air, and where she might be in some measure under the protection of her father, without joining in the society of the town.

The other partners in Mr. Cresford's house were now obliged to transact the business.

All that could be done was to await the events which time might bring forth, and meanwhile to take every opportunity of transmitting to him funds which might enable him to exist in such comfort as might be found within the walls of a prison.

Ellen never deviated from the line of conduct which she had marked out for herself. She felt perfectly confident that her husband would soon return, and she so dreaded what might be his anger if he heard of her having joined in any, the most innocent amusement, that she never left her home except to visit her father, and she never received any one except her own immediate relations. She shrank from the appearance, or the suspicion of the slightest impropriety, with as much sensitive horror as many would from any actual breach of decorum.

The even tenor of Ellen's monotonous life was one day most agreeably broken in upon by the entrance of Caroline, who, with a face of joyous mystery, made her appearance at her sister's cottage immediately after breakfast.

"I have such news for you, Ellen. You

have been right all along, and Mr. Allenham has proposed. He came to dinner yesterday, and told papa that his uncle's friend, Lord Coverdale, had presented him to the living of Longbury, and that he might now look forward to possessing a competency, and that he had long been attached to me ; and then he says that the house is a very nice one, and that he is to remove to it from his curacy in about six months.

" But you do not tell me what answer you have given him," replied Ellen, smiling.

" Oh, Ellen, do not laugh at me ; it would be affectation in me to pretend I am not very, very happy at the prospect before me. You know well enough that I have long preferred him to any one, but you cannot guess how ardently I wish I had never before fancied myself in love. All that has gone before seems to me now like a dream. My former likings have been nothing compared to this. Still I would give the world that my heart was quite, quite fresh and pure ; that I could have given it to him wholly and solely. I envy you, Ellen,

having married so early that your feelings had never been tampered with, as mine have been."

Ellen was surprised at the warmth with which Caroline spoke, and thought in her heart that she had never felt all this for Mr. Cresford. Caroline resumed,

"I wonder how a being so good, so superior, so excellent as Mr. Allenham, can have ever found any thing to please him, in such a poor weak frivolous creature as I am! I do feel so grateful to him! And I am sure if the devotion of my life can render me worthy of him, I may deserve him in that manner, though I can in no other."

Ellen was astonished at this burst of feeling in her sister. She had seen her, as she believed, in love before, that is to say, she had seen her pleased and flattered by the attentions of men; she had seen her ardently desiring to get away from her home, and she had seen her unhappy when a flirtation ended in nothing; but she had never before seen her love, with all the devotion of which an affectionate heart is capable. A real true attach-

ment exalts and refines the mind, and Mr. Allenham was a person with whom no one could associate without becoming better.

The meekness and forbearance with which Caroline bore the eternal worry of her father's temper, the asperity of which had increased with years, first attracted him; he admired her beauty, (for a woman of seven-and-twenty, provided she enjoys good health, is as pretty as ever she was,) and her evident pleasure in his preference, which, when it is accompanied with modesty, proves an almost irresistible charm to most men, combined to fix his affections. Her kind manner to all inferiors, and her gentle attention to any of the poor with whom she was brought in contact, satisfied his reason that she would make the best of wives for a clergyman. Nor was he mistaken in this expectation.

But Captain Wareham, whose disposition inclined him to look on the dark side of every picture, now felt somewhat unhappy at the thoughts of losing the daughter who had been so long accustomed to his ways; although he had often been bitterly disappointed at Caro-

line's failing to make a good establishment ; a disappointment which he had been at no pains to conceal, and which did not contribute to make her own, fall more lightly upon the poor girl.

" I suppose you must marry Mr. Allenham, Caroline ! but what is to become of me ?" he one day said, in a desponding tone. " How can a man see to all the details of a household, and the boys, and every thing ?"

" Why, papa, you always said I was but a bad housekeeper," replied Caroline, who, in her new-born happiness, and brightened prospects, had found a certain degree of courage, and sometimes ventured to reply half playfully to her father's lamentations—" You will do all the better without me, I dare say."

" No, no ! I shan't ! You have been a good girl, Caroline ; and I shall not be able to do at all well without you. You will all marry, and I shall be left alone in my old age."

" Why, papa," interrupted Matilda, " I have heard you regret a hundred times that Caroline did not marry ; and say that it preyed upon your mind to think that we were unpro-

vided for; and that if we were but married, you should be quite happy."

"In the mean time, my dear papa," said Caroline, "Matilda can take my place. She is seventeen now, and I was not older when my poor mother died."

"Ah! but she is not so steady as you were! I cannot manage you, Matilda, as I can Caroline," answered Captain Wareham, in whose estimation Caroline had risen wonderfully, now he was going to lose her.

"Well, then, I will manage you, papa, and that will be much best," replied the blunt and light-hearted Matilda, who was not easily either daunted, or vexed. "I am so glad Caroline is going to marry that dear, good Mr. Allenham, that I shall not mind casting up those abominable bills. But I will tell you what, papa, you must not scold me, as you do Caroline—I shall never bear it as she has done."

Caroline looked at Matilda, and tried to silence her, but without effect. And strange to say, Captain Wareham would bear from Matilda jokes, and even lectures, which he would never have endured from her elder

sisters. The fact was, that Matilda had a high spirit. She meant no harm; she did not mind a sharp word; and she gradually obtained a sort of mastery over her father.

The marriage was not to take place till Mr. Allenham was settled at Longbury, but all things proceeded placidly and cheerfully with the Wareham family, except that the letters which Ellen received from Mr. Cresford were more and more distressing. They were written in a state of dreadfully low spirits. He complained of mental and bodily miseries. Still she was little prepared for the shock which awaited her, when one morning she read in the papers an official return from the depôt at Verdun, and among the deaths she saw the name of Charles Cresford, Esq. !

CHAPTER IV.

And such the colouring fancy gave
To a young, warm, and dauntless chief,—
And as a lover hails the dawn
Of a first smile, so welcomed he
The sparkle of the first sword drawn
For vengeance and for liberty.

LALLA ROOKE.

Buscas en Roma a Roma o peregrino
Y en Roma misma a Roma no la hallas,
Cadaver son las que ostentò murallas
Y tumba de sì propio el Aventino.

SONATA DE QUEVEDO.

THE shriek which Ellen involuntarily uttered brought her maid to her assistance. Her father and sister were sent for, and soon arrived to support and to console her.

Though she had never been able to return the passionate love which her husband had evinced for her; though she had never loved him as she was capable of loving, still she was

dutifully attached to him, and she mourned for him with sincerity and truth. She expected to receive some parting word, some last injunctions, from one who had been so fervently devoted to her. But nothing of the kind ever reached her. She had no friends among the *detenus* to whom she could write, and she was obliged to rest contented with no farther details of the melancholy event, than the report of Colonel Eversham, who had been one of those who followed his remains to the grave, and who had soon afterwards effected his own return to England. He told her that Cresford had made various and desperate attempts to escape, which had all failed, and that his friends attributed his illness to mental agitation, as he did not seem to labour under any particular or positive complaint.

She heard, with some satisfaction, that his remains had been decently deposited in the Protestant burying-ground without the town, and that a considerable number of the most respectable of his fellow prisoners had attended his funeral.

She grieved sincerely for his untimely fate,

and she felt it the more from the belief that his passion for her, and the jealous feelings which he could not master, had, in all probability, hastened his end.

By her marriage settlements she was entitled to a handsome jointure, for poor Cresford was noble and generous with regard to money, and did not dole out the jointure of the wife according to the fortune she brought, but proportioned it to his capabilities of providing for her. The partners preserved a share in the business for her son, and her daughter was also amply portioned.

Ellen continued to live in the pretty cottage in which she had for some time resided. After a short delay the marriage of Caroline and Mr. Allenham took place, and all things resumed the even tenor of their course. Ellen found pleasure in the society of her children, whose opening intelligence rendered them each day more capable of becoming her companions, and she devoted herself to the pleasing task of leading their young hearts and minds in the right way.

At the end of the first six months of her

widowhood she paid a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Allenham, and it was a cordial to her heart to see poor Caroline, who had always been frightened and subdued at home, the joyous creature she now was. Her adoration of her husband knew no bounds: she thought him the best, the cleverest, the wisest of human beings. Her loving heart had at length found its proper resting-place, and her humble service and devotion would have made any man, except Mr. Allenham, appear in the light of a tyrant. But he was so gentle, and so kind, he smiled so gratefully at the little attentions which she incessantly paid him, he so habitually preserved towards her the sort of polished deference with which a man should always treat a woman, (in manner, at least, though he need not the more yield to her in deeds and actions,) that Ellen began to think it was possible for matrimony to be a much happier state than she had found it.

It was not long after her arrival at Longbury, that she was one day walking with her sister and her children in a retired green lane, which was nearly bowered over by the trees on

each side, when a gentleman on horseback approached. A widow in her weeds is always an object of some interest, and the horseman was wondering who that graceful creature could be, —he was watching the sportive boundings of her children, without attending to his own path, when a bough knocked off his hat just as he was about to pass, and was trying to ascertain whether the face corresponded with the form he admired. The little boy ran to pick it up, and advanced fearlessly towards the horse. Ellen turned round, half-alarmed for her child. The stranger leaped to the ground to receive the hat, saying at the same time, "Thank you, my fine fellow; you are a brave boy."

Ellen looked up with a pleased smile at the commendation of her darling George, and the stranger thought he had never in his life seen so beautiful a vision as that of the young widow with her close cap, her marble forehead, her straight-marked eyebrows, and those lustrous eyes, which gleamed so softly from beneath the hanging crape of her widow's bonnet.

He bowed with profound respect, remounted his horse, and rode on.

He longed to look back, but there was something so serenely pure and holy in the expression of her countenance, that he felt it would be almost sacrilege to betray even common admiration.

Caroline, whose career as a country town beauty had made her somewhat alive to the glances of passers by, could not help saying to Ellen, "That gentleman seemed quite struck when you turned round : I saw him give a start of surprise, and the colour came into his face."

"Oh, Caroline, how can you talk in that manner? there is something horrid in the notion of a widow exciting any feeling but pity." Ellen's delicacy shrank from such an idea, and they proceeded on their way in silence.

The stranger was a visiter at Lord Coverdale's, and at dinner he mentioned having seen this lovely widow in the green lane. "Oh, it must have been Mrs. Cresford," said Lady Coverdale; "she is our clergyman's sister-in-law, and they say she is very handsome. I

am dying to see her, but she never appears when I call on Mrs. Allenham. Her husband was one of the *detenus*, and the poor man died six or seven months ago in France."

Mr. Hamilton left Coverdale Park the next day, but

"Those eyes of deep and most expressive blue,"

came between him and his midnight dreams

"Often than any other eyes he ever knew."

Ellen returned to her cottage, where she still continued to reside, devoting great part of her liberal jointure to the assistance of her father, and to the advancement of her brothers in their various professions. The eldest was active and industrious, and was, through her means, enabled to become a partner, though but to a small amount, in the concern.

The first year of Ellen's widowhood had more than expired, and she again visited her sister and Mr. Allenham. She had changed her mourning, and etiquette no longer required that she should persevere in her seclusion.

She now accompanied the Allenhams when they dined at Coverdale Park, and all who met her were struck by her beauty and at-

tracted by her manners. Though her countenance still retained its habitually pensive expression, a smile would now occasionally light up her features, and he must have been a cold critic who could perceive any fault in the perfection of her loveliness.

One day when they arrived at Coverdale Park, Ellen found herself greeted with a bow of profound respect, and a smile of recognition, by a tall, distinguished looking man, of whom she had not the slightest recollection. She acknowledged his salutation in the polite, half-doubting manner which is usual on such an occasion. Lady Coverdale immediately introduced him as Mr. Hamilton, and added that he had returned from a solitary ride last year, quite enchanted with her noble boy, who had so fearlessly brought him his hat, under the very feet of his horse.

Ellen remembered the circumstance, and the name of Hamilton fell on her ear as being connected with a romantic history, not common in these unchivalrous days.

Mr. Hamilton, when scarcely twenty, had taken his only sister to Naples for the recovery

of her health. After having watched her gradual decline with tender and almost feminine attention, he had committed to the grave the remains of his only near relation, and found himself, without any tie, alone in a foreign land, at the moment when Buonaparte's invasion of Italy had awakened the love of liberty, which, though slumbering, was not totally extinguished in the souls of a few of her sons. With the true English spirit which considers as brethren those engaged in the struggle for freedom, he felt warmly for that lovely land—

*Italia a cui feo la sorte
Dono infelice di beltà !*

On several occasions he fought as a volunteer among the Italians, whom, in the enthusiasm of youth, he venerated as the descendants of the ancient Romans, passing over in his imagination the many centuries during which the national character had been degraded by submission to foreign powers. He forgot that the natives of the soil had for ages past allowed themselves to be mastered and controlled by hireling troops of strangers, and hoped

that if once restored to independence, they would rise regenerate from their ashes.

He had formed an ardent friendship with a young Italian, Count Adolfo Melandri, who was in command of a small squadron of troops. He acted as a sort of aide-de-camp to his friend, and fought by his side with all the generous impetuosity of his character. The star of Buonaparte, however, was in the ascendant: neither Melandri's nor young Hamilton's heroism could do more than rouse the spirit of those immediately around them.

Many of the states had been compelled to purchase an armistice by the sacrifice of their treasures of art. Melandri's indignation knew no bounds. His national pride was touched in the tenderest point, and in a skirmish which occurred shortly afterwards between his squadron and the advanced-guard of the French, in which his dispirited men were on the point of yielding, he dashed with headlong desperation into the midst of the enemy's troops.

Hamilton, who loved his friend with pas-

sionate devotion, and regarded him as the one being in whom the spirit of the olden time still survived, watched over his safety with almost religious veneration.

They both performed prodigies of valour ; but at length Melandrini, sank covered with wounds, and faint from the loss of blood. Hamilton stood over the body of his friend, defending it with the energy of despair, and firmly resolved that while he retained life, it should never fall into the hands of the foe. The troops in the mean time rallied, and, returning to the charge, drove back the enemy. Hamilton was found still protecting the almost lifeless form of the Italian chief, which he never quitted for a moment, but bore in his own arms back to the entrenchments. His efforts to save his friend were, however, unavailing : Melandrini had found the death he sought, and only survived long enough to express his gratitude to Hamilton, whose gallant feat was soon noised abroad, and reached the ears of many who were not personally acquainted with him.

The surrender of Mantua put an end to all

idea of further resistance. Italy allowed herself quietly to be plundered of all her most precious and holy ornaments, even including the famous image of our Lady of Loretto, and Hamilton in disgust abandoning the wretched land, returned to his own free and happy country. His paternal estates were considerable, and he resolved to devote himself in private to the welfare of those who were dependant upon him, and in public to the preservation of that liberty which he believed to be the basis of all that ennobles man. He distinguished himself in Parliament, at first, perhaps, by too great vehemence, on the liberal side; but his own clear head and maturer judgment soon tempered what might have been extravagant in his enthusiasm, and at the age of nine-and-twenty he was as practically useful a member of society, as he had originally been a romantic advocate of liberty.

Ellen, who long ago had accidentally heard the history of his achievements, looked on him with a certain degree of respect, as the hero who, to her girlish imagination, had realized the stories of Paladins of old. It was with plea-

sure, therefore, that she found herself seated by him at dinner.

His appearance and his address did not disappoint her. His flashing eye seemed formed "to threaten and command;" his athletic form might well, single-handed, have kept at bay a host of common men; while she could imagine that from those expressive lips might flow streams of eloquence to sway the listening senate. Still he was peculiarly simple and straight-forward: with all his fame about him he had a frank manner, as though what was said by him, carried with it no more weight than if it had been uttered by the most undistinguished individual in the room. Yet every thing he said was well said; all showed reflection, reading, sound judgment, and refined taste. He was, in all respects, so superior to any one with whom Ellen had ever yet been thrown, that he appeared to her a being of another order.

The enthusiasm which we have described as being a leading feature of his character, although tempered by judgment in political

matters, was still all there; and the impression produced by the first sight of Ellen in her weeds, was not weakened by further acquaintance. The lightning of her smile, when usurping the place of her usually pensive expression, reminded him of the days of youthful romance, when he and his friend Melandrinì used to study Petrarch together, and reading of the “lampeggiar del angelico riso,” would picture to themselves what must have been that Laura, who could render the poet,

Si da se stesso diviso
E fatto singolar da l'altra gente.

He now thought, if she had resembled Ellen, there was nothing to marvel at in the poet's long and hopeless devotion.

During the two years which she had passed in retirement, she had read a great deal; and the education which she had thus given herself, had tended more to cultivate her mind than all the accomplishments with which governesses cram the common run of young ladies. The more he saw of her, the more he became con-

vinced that the qualities of her head and heart fully corresponded with the loveliness of her person.

Lord and Lady Coverdale found their most agreeable friend, Mr. Hamilton, vastly more willing to prolong his visit than usual. He seemed much struck with the excellence of Mr. Allenham's opinions upon the subject of the poor laws, and he frequently walked to the Parsonage, to discuss the subject with him.

The eagerness with which Mr. Hamilton accepted their invitation to repeat his visit, made them begin to suspect that the youthful widow had more to say to the attractions of the Parsonage, than Mr. Allenham and the poor laws. Still, though he evidently admired Mrs. Cresford, there was nothing which could justify any reports. He was so afraid of alarming her by any indiscreet avowal of his preference, that he continued merely to seek the society of the family in general.

Caroline, however, who was not so very delicate upon such subjects as her sister, could refrain no longer.

"Well, Ellen! I suppose, now you have been seven months out of your weeds, I may venture to say that Mr. Hamilton admires you? and it is my belief, though I am not apt to place much reliance on men in general, it is my belief, he intends to propose to you."

"Oh no, Caroline! he has never said any thing like it." But Ellen's heart beat quicker, and the colour mounted in her cheeks.

"Yes, yes! you think so too! You are blushing ten times more than when poor Mr. Cresford proposed." (Caroline always disliked Mr. Cresford, for she was exceedingly afraid of him!)

"Hush, Caroline! Do not speak so of my poor husband! He was very fond of me; and nothing in the world should ever induce me to do any thing that was the least disrespectful towards his memory."

"Well, but you are not bound to remain a widow, from the age of three-and-twenty, for evermore!"

"I am not out of mourning yet, Caroline."

No more passed; but this conversation made Ellen appear more conscious, and less at her

ease in Mr. Hamilton's presence, than she had previously done. From this sign he gathered hope.

The remarks of friends, the quizzing of acquaintances, the reports of the world, greatly accelerate matters when there already exists a real preference, though they often completely nip a slight one in its bud. There is a particular moment at which they fan the flame, and a previous one at which they blow it out.

CHAPTER V.

What voice is this, thou evening gale,
That mingles with thy rising wail,
And as it passes sadly seems
The faint return of youthful dreams.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

MR. HAMILTON's manner became more and more marked, and before the expiration of his second visit to Lord Coverdale's, he one day took courage and spoke his sentiments to Ellen:

She received his avowal with all the confusion of a girl who, for the first time, hears expressions of love addressed to her. It was that now, for the first time, she felt the passion herself. She could not deny her preference, and he was made happy by hearing from her

own lips that she esteemed him, that she believed she could be happy as his wife.

But she persisted in a resolution to see him no more till the two years of her widowhood had expired, and till then not even to correspond with him. He thought her delicacy rather over-strained — he thought her almost prudish — but a man does not love or value a woman the less for erring on the side of decorum, especially when he is confident he has undivided possession of her heart; and the speaking eyes, the trembling hand, the faltering voice, all assured him that such was the case.

She made him promise to confide to no one their engagement, and he tore himself away, to get through the four months which intervened, as best he might. He almost repented having spoken to her at all, and at moments doubted whether the delightful certainty of being loved, quite compensated for the loss of her society.

She, on her part, half repented of her decision in banishing him, and quite repented of her prohibition to correspond. Her affec-

tion for him increased rapidly in absence. This is frequently the case with women. When in the presence of the person they love, reserve and modesty prevent their freely giving way to what they feel, but in absence they dwell without fear on every word and look, and the imagination supplies food to the feelings.

Ellen consulted with herself whether she should impart what had occurred to her sister, and, upon the whole, she thought it best to do so. It seemed unkind to conceal such an important circumstance from one who took so tender an interest in all that concerned her, and, moreover, she should have some one to whom she could expatiate upon the perfections of Mr. Hamilton.

Caroline was half angry at not having been at once let into the secret, but she was so pleased at the prospect of her sister's enjoying such happiness as she now knew, that she soon got over her little vexation.

As Ellen expected, she proved an invaluable confidante in one respect; she listened with delight to any tale of love; but in another respect she rendered the task she had imposed

upon herself more difficult, as she was constantly arguing with Ellen upon the overstrained delicacy of sending Mr. Hamilton away for the next few months. But the more Ellen longed to break it, the more firmly she adhered to her determination. She accused herself of ingratitude towards him who was the father of her children, in feeling so very happy as she did, and she resolved to pay this tribute of respect to his memory.

The four months elapsed. Ellen had remained all this time with her sister, and it was to Longbury that Mr. Hamilton returned, when the time of his probation was over.

If Ellen's passion had increased in absence. Mr. Hamilton's had not cooled, and never were two people more thoroughly attached, more romantically in love, and what, in the long run, conduces still more to lasting happiness, more entirely suited in disposition, than Ellen and her future husband.

Their approaching marriage was now declared, and Lady Coverdale rallied Mr. Hamilton upon his thirst for information concerning the poor laws.

Captain Wareham, who was an affectionate father, although an irritable man, rejoiced in the bright prospects of his daughter, and he was much gratified by the connexion. Mr. Hamilton's situation in life was such as to render his alliance eligible to any one, in however high a station; and to a man who had been reduced by poverty below his original position in the scale of society, it was peculiarly satisfactory.

The marriage was to take place at Longbury, and after the delays necessary for settlements, &c. the day was fixed. Mr. Allenham performed the ceremony. Her father gave her away. There was no pomp; Ellen wished to have the whole quiet and unostentatious. Deeply as she was attached to Mr. Hamilton—confident as she was in his love for her, much as her reason, as well as her heart, approved of the step she was about to take, a vague dread came over her as the day approached. Sounds as of other days were ringing in her ears. At times she almost fancied she heard the cathedral bells

of her native place, the chime of the Minster clock striking the quarters.

Who has not, without any concatenation of ideas which he can trace, when dropping asleep perhaps, or when plunged in a dreamy reverie, felt as it were the vibration of well-known sounds, and with effort roused himself to the recollection that he was far away from the home which was thus brought to his mind?

On the eventful morning, the full deep swell of the cathedral bells, which rang out so sonorously on the morning of her first marriage, seemed to make themselves heard through the merry peal of the three or four tinkling bells which were all the boast of Longbury church.

As Mr. Allenham pronounced the words, "Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," that sound again rang in her ears—a mist came over her eyes—she fancied it was Mr. Cresford's hand in which her's was placed, and she fainted in her husband's arms.

CHAPTER VI.

For contemplation he, and valour formed ;
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace ;
He for God only, she for God in him.

MILTON.

THE last few words of the ceremony were quickly hurried over. Ellen was supported into the vestry, where she quickly recovered ; and the circumstance of a bride's fainting was not an event of such rare occurrence as to excite much surprise.

Mr. Hamilton's place was situated in a lovely country on the borders of Sussex, and Surrey. Hanging woods, extensive oak copses mixed with birch, sandy lanes, hedges which are enlivened by large hollies with their glossy leaves and their red berries — wild patches of heath, studded with juniper bushes

—fern and innumerable wild flowers in the shaws and dingles—banks blue with violets, and dells yellow with primroses, are the characteristics of that most enjoyable part of England.

Belhanger, which was the name of his place, was in the Elizabethan style. A spacious hall, in which was an immense fire-place, surmounted by the antlers of some patriarchal stag, communicated with a large low oak dining-room, and through some smaller apartments to a drawing-room, which was hung with tapestry, and adorned with beautiful oak carving ; the crossings of the beams in the ceiling were ornamented with wooden rosettes, in the most antique taste, while the rest of the room was provided with all the essentials requisite for modern comfort. A broad and massive staircase of black oak led, as is usual with buildings of that period, to a gallery on the upper floor, which extended the whole length of the south front, and which, with its two fire-places, and its innumerable windows of all shapes and sizes, admitting every ray of sun, was one

of the most delightful winter apartments imaginable.

The exterior of the mansion was as irregular as the most ardent lover of the picturesque could desire. It was built of grey-stone, and composed of gable-ends of every possible angle. As its name indicated, it was built upon the side of a hill, which had originally been covered with hanging woods. The woods had been partially cleared away near the house, and a sloping lawn led down to the small but romantic deer-park in the valley.

Ellen thought Belhanger the very *beau ideal* of an English manorial house, and, if she had not been too much in love, and too happy in the affections of such a man as Mr. Hamilton, to find room in her heart for emotions that were not connected with him, she would have thought the possession of such a place as Belhanger, an additional pleasure.

The poor people, too, were a more primæval race than those who have not lived in that part of the world would expect to find at so short a distance from the metropolis. The bright

blue smock-frocks which are there the common dress of the men, and the red cloaks which the women still wear, gave a picturesque appearance to the peasant congregation as they trooped out of church, and wound down the steep road, by the beech-crowned knoll.

Ellen was charmed with all she saw, but, perhaps, she would have been equally charmed had her home been less perfect in itself, for she had that within, which would have made a cottage appear to her a palace—a desert a paradise.

The judicious kindness of Mr. Hamilton to her children, the eldest of whom was now six years old, gave him still another claim on her affections and her gratitude. He counselled with her on the best course of education, the proper method of training a boy's mind, and entered into the subject with all a father's eagerness and anxiety. Ellen rejoiced that she had given her son such a protector, and looked forward to his making, under such guidance, a useful and an exemplary member of society.

Mr. Hamilton found in Ellen new charms,

new virtues, each succeeding day. She was one of those shrinking and sensitive creatures who cannot put forth half their powers of pleasing except in the intimacy of domestic life, and under the fostering hand of kindness. Before her first marriage she had been but a child, a timid frightened child—while the wife of Mr. Cresford, although adored by himself, he had been so fearful of her appearing too attractive in the eyes of others, that she had acquired the habit of trying to glide through life unobserved, in order to avoid any ebullitions of jealousy on his part, rather than of attempting to shine as an agreeable person. She was astonished and delighted when she saw her husband's expressive eyes follow her as she spoke, and gleam on her with kindly pride when others seemed to admire her.

Life was to her a new state of existence: not that she had hitherto been an unhappy person; she had always repeated to herself how much cause she had for gratitude: but the inward dancing of the heart she had never before experienced, and she often said to her husband, "Algernon, you make me too hap-

py. This cannot last; something must happen: I do not deserve to be so blessed above the rest of womankind."

He would reply with a smile, "Do you fancy, Ellen, you are the only woman whose husband loves her?"

"No, but I am the only woman in the world who am loved by you. Am I not?" she added, with a playful glance of entire confidence in his devotion.

When Parliament met, they repaired to London, and she then moved in a sphere vastly more elevated than that to which she had been introduced as Mrs. Cresford. But she had so much native grace and dignity, that she did not appear to be transplanted into a new soil, but rather to be now restored to that which was natural and congenial to her.

She had the rapture of hearing her husband spoken of with respect, and of seeing him treated with deference, by every one. By his own party he was looked up to as one of its most influential members, more from the weight of his personal character than from that of his

property and situation, although they also were of considerable importance. By his opponents he was considered as the one fair man, who, though decided in his own opinions, was ready to render justice to the uprightness of those who differed from him. There can be no condition of life happier than that of Ellen at this moment, none more respectable in the scale of human beings, than that of the wife of an Englishman of unblemished reputation, who holds a distinguished position in the Senate of that nation whose laws and constitution have been the admiration, and the model, of nearly every civilized country in both hemispheres.

Ellen again became a mother, and the birth of a little girl, if possible, cemented more strongly the bond of union between herself, her husband, and her children.

Nearly two years had now elapsed since she had become the happy wife of Mr. Hamilton ; and he had for nearly two years enjoyed the society of the lovely and devoted woman for whom his affection daily increased, as her valuable qualities continually opened upon him.

She was adored by all around. The poor showered blessings upon her name whenever it was mentioned,—their richer neighbours had nothing but acts and words of kindness to record of her. Her eldest brother took every opportunity that his avocations allowed him, to run down to Belhanger. Her father, when with Mr. Hamilton, seemed to lose his captiousness; for there is a magic in very high breeding which renders any ebullition of temper almost impracticable. Matilda, who was become a fine showy girl, often passed some time with her sister Ellen, and had profited much by her example and advice.

Mr. and Mrs. Allenham were at this moment in the house; Lord and Lady Coverdale, and their daughter, had just arrived, and some other persons, political friends of Mr. Hamilton's.

Lady Coverdale had been telling Ellen she thought her the most fortunate woman in the world; she had been speaking of Mr. Hamilton, whom she had known from his infancy, in terms which even Ellen thought worthy of the theme, and had been saying how happy

she should esteem herself if she could ever see her daughter blessed with such a husband, and possessed of such a home; Algernon's friends had been gaily complimenting him upon his good taste, and his good fortune, and declaring they had sufficient discrimination to appreciate such a woman, if they could only have the good fortune to meet with any one at all resembling Mrs. Hamilton, when one morning at breakfast Ellen received a letter from her brother, enclosing one directed to her as Mrs. Cresford, and addressed to the house in London which she had formerly inhabited.

The post-mark was foreign, and there was something in a letter addressed to her by that name, which struck her as being so strange that she did not open it, but folding it again in her brother's envelope, she waited till she could retire to peruse its contents. She continued to perform her part of hostess at the breakfast-table, and told herself it must be a begging letter, from some one, perhaps, who had known Mr. Cresford at Verdun.

Still the letter haunted her, and she could

scarcely smile at the gay jests which passed round the breakfast-table, or listen to the news and gossip contained in the correspondence of the other members of the society. The outside was so covered with post-marks, and various directions, that she had not remarked in what sort of hand the name was written, and she quietly took it out of the envelope, just to see if it did look like a begging letter. Her former name always made her shudder, she could not tell why, and she had often reproached herself for the feeling, as an unkind and ungrateful one towards the memory of him who was gone. It was that strange instinct which had made her so quickly put this letter aside, and it was with an unaccountable trepidation that she again drew it forth to examine the hand-writing. She looked and looked again, till her eyes swam. It was very like the writing which was only too familiar to her. It was,—it must be his writing,—she could not be mistaken; only it was impossible,—quite impossible. Yet it might contain his last behests, which had, from some cause, never been delivered before. She could not

open it. She hastily concealed it, and turning deadly pale, she sat, scarcely conscious of what passed around her, till the last person had been helped to his last cup of tea.

She longed to know the contents, but there came a sickness over her heart, which made her postpone the dreaded moment. At length the company rose one by one, and straggled towards the windows. She summoned all her might, and walked steadily to the door — she sought her own boudoir, and seating herself upon the sofa, she again unfolded the envelope, she again gazed on the outside — she had not yet courage to break the seal.

There was something dreadful in thus receiving the dying injunctions of one husband, one who had loved her, too, so passionately, in reading the ebullitions of his vehement affection, when she was the adoring wife of another. She felt as though he were about to speak to her from the grave.

She looked at the postmarks. There were upon it, in various coloured inks, Gratz, Vienna, Dresden, Magdeburg, Hamburg. No

Verdun postmark ! How strange ! Wonder, terror, conquered all other feelings — she tore open the seal—it was indeed his own handwriting !—the date, Gratz, June 1808—What could it mean ? She looked at the end—it was his own, very own name !—it was addressed to her ! It began, “ My beloved wife, my own Ellen ! ” She could read no more ; the letter dropped from her hand, and she fainted on the floor.

She was in this state, when Mr. Hamilton, alarmed by her paleness at breakfast, sought her in her boudoir. He raised her from the ground, and calling her maid, soon succeeded in restoring her to herself—To herself ? No ! She could never again be what she had been !

She gazed around with wild and haggard eyes ; then motioning the maid to leave the room, and watching with agonized fear till the double doors were both closed, she screamed rather than said,

“ He is alive ! he is alive ! I am not your wife, Algernon ! I am not yours ! ” and she threw herself into his arms, she clung to him, she clasped her arms around his neck, with

desperate energy, as if she thought thus to rivet the tie she felt was severed.

“Ellen! dearest Ellen! my own gentle Ellen, are you raving? You must be ill! What is the matter? You really frighten me!” he added, attempting to smile.

“Look there, Algernon! there it lies! I have only read the first line, and would to heaven I had died! Oh! if I could but die now, with my head on your bosom,—your arms around me,—my eyes fixed on your’s! Dearest, dearest Algernon! I love you better than any thing else in the whole world—better, ten thousand times better than myself! Words cannot express the thousandth part of the agonizing love I feel for you! and it is all a crime! Look there! read that!” and she pressed her hands against her eyeballs, as if to exclude light and consciousness.

This burst of passion was so unlike his retiring Ellen, whose affection, though evinced by every action of her life, implied by all she said, had still seemed frightened back into her heart, if in any moment of tenderness she was called upon to couch it into actual

language, that Mr. Hamilton was lost in astonishment ! In dread and wonder he took the letter in his hand—he saw the beginning—he looked at the date—he staggered to a chair, and exclaiming, “ Merciful Heaven !” he too remained stupified, unable to utter, and scarcely to think, or to comprehend the extent of the misfortune which had befallen them.

At length reason in some measure resumed its sway, and he suggested, “ May it not be a forgery ? Are you sure it is his hand ?” A momentary light flashed athwart her mind ; she seized the paper, and they sat down together to the perusal of that letter, on which their fates so completely hung !

CHAPTER VII.

Son ilusion mis dichas
Son realidad mis penas.

IT was with difficulty that Algernon and Ellen could fix their eyes upon the paper; every thing swam before them. They read in silence the following letter—with what feelings may be better imagined, than described.

“MY BELOVED WIFE, MY OWN ELLEN,

“You must have been astonished at not hearing from me the result of the desperate attempt to escape from Verdun, of which I informed you. It succeeded! so far, at least, as getting safe out of that horrible dungeon, disguised as one of the mourners at my own funeral, according to the plan I hinted at in

my letter by Maitland, and which he promised to describe to you more fully when he reached England. I made my way across the Rhine into Germany; but I found the examinations so very strict, and the officers at the custom-houses so exceedingly suspicious, that I fancied I should be safer if I advanced farther into Germany, and tried to work my way to Hamburg.

“I was, however, almost immediately seized as a spy. My ignorance of the language was supposed to be a feint, and I was passed on, from authority to authority, from governor to governor, till I believe they began to think me a person of great importance.

“I was at length cast into a prison at this place, and here I have now languished more than four years.

“I did not venture to write to you while wandering in France. All letters being opened, they might have led to my being traced and identified; and from the moment I was in the power of the Germans, I was not allowed the use of pen and paper, lest there might be some

hidden meaning in any thing I might despatch to England.

“I have now endured four years of mental anguish, such as man has seldom survived. There hangs a mist over some of the horrible years spent in this abode of misery. The wretches who drove me to desperation, treated me as a madman for resenting their cruelty, and I found myself at one time pinioned in a straight-waistcoat !

“Was it not enough to madden a cooler head than mine, to gall a calmer heart than mine, to be thus severed from the creature one adores, to know one’s lovely wife, left lonely and unprotected, in the bloom of youth, amid all the temptations of this corrupt world ? Oh, Ellen ! I shall go mad if I think of that ! But you are virtuous, Ellen !—Yes, yes—If there is virtue in woman it is in you. And yet—Five long years of absence ! Oh ! you will have forgotten me. You cannot have loved me, and me alone, in all these years ! Oh God ! if you should have loved another ! My brain goes round ! Be faithful to me, Ellen, as you

value my reason, and your own welfare here and hereafter.

“But I am altered, fearfully altered. I am grown grey; I am twenty years older than when we parted. But I love you, Ellen, I love you with more ardour, more burning, maddening fervour, than when first I bore you in your maiden bloom from the home of your childhood.

“Write to me, my love, my wife, my own, own blessed wife! Your letter will reach me in safety if you inclose it to the new governor, who is a kind-hearted man, and has given me permission to bid you do so. He pities me. He will stand my friend. He promises to forward a petition which I am now drawing up, direct to the Emperor, and a ray of hope has dawned upon me. I may yet return to you, my Ellen, and to my children—

“In life and in death,

“Your adoring husband,

“CHARLES CRESFORD.”

Ellen and Algernon spoke not — moved not. They sat transfixed — they did not venture to

raise their eyes to each other. Neither could entertain any doubt of the authenticity of the letter. It would be folly, worse than folly to utter what neither could believe. They who had been all the world to each other—they whose love had been so pure that angels might have looked down from heaven and smiled upon it—what were they now? They dared not think.

At length Ellen murmured in a low and almost choked voice—

“Is he my husband, Algernon? Does the law say he is my husband?”

“Ellen, do not make me speak my own doom.”

“It is enough,” she said, “and my child is—” she paused for a moment, and after a short struggle, continued,—“is illegitimate!”

He was silent.

“Oh, merciful Heaven!” she screamed, “it cannot be true,” and she started from her seat with a wild look of hope. “It is a dream! Tell me so, Algernon, my own Algernon, my husband, tell me so. Speak to me!” and she threw herself on her knees at his feet, with

clasped hands, and beseeching eyes, looking up in his face.

He lifted her from the ground, and whispered,—“We can fly, Ellen. There are other lands than this. There are countries where we may be beyond the reach of British laws, where we may have the clear blue sky of heaven above us, where Nature pours forth her treasures to man with a bounteous hand; where we may live in freedom from the trammels of human institutions, but bound by the most sacred ties—Our own vows of eternal constancy, which surely have been registered above.”

“Live with you, as your mistress! No, never, Algernon!” and she drew up her slender form to its full height, and stood the very personification of female purity and dignity. “Never, Algernon! Any thing would be more tolerable than to have you cease to respect me.”

She seemed to have regained her self-command. An almost supernatural strength for a moment inspired her.

“Now what is to be done? What is it our

duty to do? But oh! the shame, the dreadful shame, of being exposed to the world as having lived for two years in sin."

At this moment the voices of the children were heard in the passage; they flung open the door, and came bounding joyously into the room with the wild flowers they had gathered in their walk. The sight of them softened and overcame the mother,—she burst into a flood of tears.

"They are his children," she exclaimed, "and he will take them from me. I know he will—Whichever way I turn, fresh horrors surround me!"

The poor little things, astonished at their reception, stood aghast. Mr. Hamilton hastily bade them leave their mother, told them she was not well, and hurried them out of the room.

"Ellen, dearest Ellen," he said, and approached her. He took her hand, when she started away.

"You must not touch me, Algernon! It is a crime. You say yourself I am his wife, and he is coming home. Algernon," she said, in a clear low sepulchral voice, speaking very slowly,

"I cannot be forced to live with him again. No law can compel me to do that. Tell me the law,—let me know the truth."

"I cannot say exactly; we will inquire. Compose yourself: let us do nothing rashly. Perhaps he may never return,—perhaps he may not live to return; we do not know."

"But I am not your wife?"

"This letter may still be a forgery."

"No, no, it is too true! and I am not your wife," she repeated, with the accent of utter hopelessness.

He stood in silence; he could not say she was. He endured agony equal to her's, except that he did not feel the guilt and the remorse which were added to all her other sufferings. They remained silent till she could endure it no longer. "Algernon, no law can be so cruel as to separate us: it is impossible. After all, we were lawfully married in a church: no one forbade the banns,—no one answered the awful adjuration, 'Let him now speak, or ever after hold his peace.' Yes, we must be lawfully married. We are, are we not? Say so, my own Algernon, my husband?" and she wound

herself round him, and looked up in his face with all the winning tenderness she could put into those melting eyes. "I am your wife, your wedded wife, am I not, dearest?" and she tried to smile, a sweet, sad, heart-rending smile.

This was too much for poor Hamilton. He took her in his arms, he pressed her to his bosom. "You are my own Ellen, my life, my love, the joy of my heart; without you life would be intolerable."

"I am your wife, dearest; say so,—in pity say so!"

"Yes, yes, you are! In spite of ordinances, human and divine, you are; you shall be my wife!"

"No," she said, slowly shaking her head; "No! if you speak so, then I am not your wife."

She gradually relaxed her hold, her arms dropped by her side, and she sank into a chair.

He looked on her for a few moments with a fixed gaze of despair, then striking his forehead he rushed out of the room, darted down

the stairs, out of the house, and plunged into the most retired part of the park, where he wildly paced the ground, beating his bosom, and almost dashing his head against the trees.

When Ellen saw him hurry from her presence she gave one shriek.

“He is gone!” she cried; “gone, I have lost him for ever!”

In the mean time the maid, who had heard her master quit the apartment, came to inquire how her mistress felt after her attack of faintness. She was terrified when she saw her countenance. However, her entrance had in some measure the effect of forcing Ellen to rouse herself. She begged her maid to leave her, assuring her she was quite recovered. She rose, and staggered to the window to prevent meeting the eyes of the faithful Stanmore, who had lived with her from the time she first married.

Stanmore respectfully retired, but she was so much alarmed at the state in which she found her mistress, that she went to Mrs. Allen-

ham's room, to tell her that she feared Mrs. Hamilton was seriously indisposed.

Caroline hastened to her sister, and found her dissolved in tears, which at length flowed copiously. To all Caroline's questions she answered only by continued weeping, and sobs which succeeded each other so quickly that she could not have uttered, if she had wished to do so.

The fresh air had in some measure restored Mr. Hamilton. He had recovered the powers of his mind. He had reflected that many unforeseen accidents might still prevent the return of Mr. Cresford; that the idea of his being alive, if once noised abroad, would throw a shade over their future lives, even should it eventually prove an unfounded notion. He persuaded himself once more it might be a trick for the purpose of extorting money upon the supposition that he would attempt to bribe the first husband to silence. He was not acquainted with Mr. Cresford's hand-writing, and his hopes revived. At all events, the report once circulated could not be crushed, and he

hastened back to the house, if possible, to calm Ellen, and to bind her to secrecy.

He entered her boudoir just as Mrs. Allenham was trying to extract from her the cause of her distress, when Ellen, springing from her seat, rushed into Algernon's arms, exclaiming,

"You are not gone for ever. Thank God, I see you again!"

Mrs. Allenham looked on in surprise. Could it be that Ellen and her husband had quarrelled? They whose conjugal felicity had become almost proverbial? Such scenes never occurred between herself and Mr. Allenham! Ellen was as good-tempered as she was; and though Mr. Hamilton was a more high-flown romantic sort of man than Mr. Allenham—not so religious perhaps—not so much in the habit of regulating his feelings by the exact measure of duty, still he was an excellent man, and a good-tempered man. What could it all mean?

However, she felt she could be of little service, and that as Ellen had some one with

her who would take care of her, should she again feel unwell, she left them together.

“Compose yourself, dearest Ellen,” Mr. Hamilton said, in a soothing tone; “I have much to say, and you must listen attentively to my arguments.”

“Any thing to hear your voice—to still look upon you,” and she seated herself opposite to him, and fixed her eyes upon him, as if she would drink in every word which fell from his lips, and indelibly fix in her mind every lineament of that face which she was soon no more to see.

“Listen to me. There is a possibility that this letter may not be authentic.”

She shook her head sorrowfully. He continued,

“All things are possible. Then there is more than a possibility, that, if alive, he whose name I cannot bring myself to speak, may never reach England. His health seems to be impaired,—he may sink under his sufferings. If he should never return, why should we have wilfully proclaimed to the world our disgrace,

—for disgrace it will be in the eyes of the world, though no guilt is ours?”

“But we should be guilty now, knowing what we do know.”

“We are not quite sure: let us wait for confirmation before we breathe one word concerning this letter to any living being. Remember, that if we were to learn the next day that the poor prisoner had fallen a victim to his miseries, that he was at rest, though we might then be lawfully united, our child, our innocent child, would, by our own imprudence, be proved illegitimate.”

Ellen's countenance changed: she listened with a persuaded air. Mr. Hamilton resumed,

“We must, for her sake, hide for the present all we feel; we must, if possible, assume a calm exterior, and trust to Providence for the issue.”

“I wish I knew what was right. And yet what you tell me must be so. But I cannot,—I cannot show my face to-day; I am sure if I did, I should betray all.” After a pause, she added, “I will tell you what you must do, Algernon, though it breaks my heart to say

so ; — you must either allow me to pay my father a visit, or you must yourself go away for a time, — make a tour, — visit the lakes, — go to Scotland. We must not live together, till this dreadful mystery is cleared up, till our fate is ascertained one way or another.”

“ What ! leave the company we have staying in the house ? Impossible, without exciting such observations.”

“ They will be gone in three days, and then — then — Yes, it is better to be miserable only, than to be miserable and guilty also !”

“ If it is your wish, Ellen, I will leave you. It is best I should be the one to go : if you were to quit this roof it would feel more like a real and final separation.”

“ My fainting fit will be an excuse for my not appearing to-day. Indeed I do feel so ill I could not bear my part in society. To-morrow I will try to do as you wish. I will strive, for the sake of my poor little Agnes.”

The whole of that day was spent by the wretched Ellen in a state of stupefaction. The misfortune which had befallen her was too great and too overwhelming to be completely com-

prehended. Her overstrained nerves could bear no more, and she sat in a state of comparative calmness. She expressed no wish to see her children, no desire for any thing, and Mrs. Allenham bade the maid remain in the adjoining apartment.

She returned to the company herself, and informed them of her sister's sudden indisposition. She tried, with all the tact of which she was mistress, to extract from Lady Coverdale whether Mr. Hamilton had ever been subject to starts of temper, but she elicited nothing from her, but a recapitulation of his virtues.

CHAPTER VIII.

We that did nothing study but the way
To love each other, with which thoughts the day
Rose with delight to us, and with them set,
Must learn the cruel art how to forget.

————— Like turtle doves
Dislodged from their haunts, we must in tears
Unwind a love knit up in many years.
Now turn we each from each—so fare our hearts,
As the divorced soul from its body parts.

THE SURRENDER.

MR. HAMILTON had half succeeded in persuading himself the whole thing was a cunning forgery. The story seemed so improbable. No letter had ever arrived from Cresford—no Maitland had ever brought any intelligence of this attempt to escape. Colonel Eversham had seen him carried to the grave—the funeral had taken place at night, by Mr. Cresford's dying request, he said. How unlikely, what-

ever might subsequently have been the difficulties of his situation, that, if alive, he should really have allowed so much time to elapse without writing to the wife with whom he was so madly in love! These reflections all presented themselves to his mind, and by dinner-time he was able to take his accustomed seat, and to do the honours of his table with tolerable self-possession.

Towards evening Mrs. Allenham was alarmed by a recurrence of Ellen's faintness: it was immediately after her children had been brought in to wish her good night.

Mrs. Allenham was urgent that a physician should be sent for. Ellen appeared to revive, to express her vehement desire that no one should be summoned. She only wished that her maid should sleep on a sofa in her room, in case she should be worse in the night. Mrs. Allenham thought Mr. Hamilton rather remiss in not sending for medical advice.

"Mr. Allenham," she thought, "though he does not make such a fuss about his love for me, would never let me be as ill as Ellen is, without sending for all the doctors in the

neighbourhood ; but different men have different ways, and one must take people as one finds them."

One thing, however, she resolved upon, that if Ellen was not better the next morning, she would speak her mind openly to Mr. Hamilton, and insist on his having the very best advice.

Ellen was no sooner in her bed, than she dropped into a profound slumber, from which she awoke early the next morning, refreshed in body, and with only a vague recollection of the tremendous change which had taken place in her fate. By degrees her actual situation opened upon her.

How dreadful is the waking from a real sound sleep of forgetfulness, after any severe misfortune has befallen us ! The temporary oblivion of our sorrows, scarcely compensates for the agony of recollection.

She was, however, aware of the necessity of concealing what she felt, if she wished to preserve the illegitimacy of her child from becoming public, while there was yet a hope of its remaining unknown. She passed some

time in humble prayer, imploring guidance from above, judgment to know what was right, and strength to execute it.

She rose from prayer in a calmer frame of mind — she felt herself fortified for the task before her — she thought that if Algernon left her at Belhanger alone, there could be no crime in delaying the promulgation of the dreadful secret, for the chance of saving herself and her child from unmerited disgrace.

She went down to breakfast, and she made an attempt to smile in return to the salutations and inquiries of her friends. She was in the act of assuring them she was quite well, when Mr. Hamilton entered the apartment. She started as she heard his well-known turn of the lock, she faltered in her speech as he entered, her paleness was replaced by a vivid glow, which overspread her face, but she turned not her eyes upon him; she studiously avoided meeting his; the first sound of his voice thrilled through her very being.

She took her station at the breakfast-table,

upon the same spot where yesterday she had received that fatal intelligence which had so completely broken up her happiness. She took her station as mistress of the mansion to which she had no longer any right. She felt she was an impostor.

Mr. Hamilton, who had, the preceding day, buoyed himself up with something more of hope than she had done, had passed a night of anxious restlessness. Sleep had not for one moment weighed down his eyelids; and when at length Ellen ventured almost by stealth to take one look at that beloved countenance, her heart was pierced to see it so wan, so haggard.

Their object was to avoid exciting remark. A plan was proposed, and acceded to, of driving to see a fine castle in the neighbourhood, in which was a collection of pictures. Ellen accompanied the ladies in an open carriage, and Mr. Hamilton took the gentlemen across the country, on horseback.

While others were engaged in admiring some of the master-pieces of art, Ellen found herself near Mr. Hamilton.

"Algernon, you look very ill," she said :
"it breaks my heart to see you !"

"Can it be otherwise, Ellen? Even you can scarcely know the tortures I endure."

"We must not speak to each other. I shall lose the self-command I have so struggled to obtain. But I have behaved well, Algernon. I have conducted myself according to your wishes?"

"Yes! yes! May God bless you, dearest and best! I cannot trust myself to say another word."

He hastened away, and went to the stables, as though to see for the horses and the barouche. Ellen busied herself in examining a picture, of which she did not see one form, and drove back her bursting tears, and stilled the tumult of her soul.

On their way home, Lady Coverdale was eloquent on the beauties of this part of the world, on the charms of Belhanger, and discussed with much interest the plan for the flower-garden which Ellen was making along the terrace in front of the house.

“When your shrubs have grown, and the creepers cover that bowered walk to the left, it will be quite beautiful. Are you not always very impatient at the slow growth of plants? One has to wait so long before one sees any result produced. I think it is a great objection to gardening. However, you are very young, and you may look forward to many years of enjoying your improvements.”

These simple words shot like daggers through Ellen's heart. She could not reply, and notwithstanding all her efforts to appear at her ease, the conversation flagged. Caroline had seen Ellen speak in a low voice to Mr. Hamilton, while others were engaged with the paintings; she had seen him suddenly leave the room, and perceiving how oppressed Ellen's spirits were, became thoroughly convinced some serious disagreement had occurred.

“Well,” she thought, “I suppose it will all come right again. Every body cannot go on so smoothly as dear Mr. Allenham and I do!”

When they returned from their excursion,

Ellen retired to her room. She had not the heart, as usual, to repair to the nursery, or the school-room. The sight of her two elder children harrowed her soul, from the fear that she possessed them only for a time, that they would be torn from her, just when their opening intelligence, their amiable dispositions had superadded to the instinctive love of a mother, the affection produced by their own good qualities. The sight of her little girl was scarcely less agonizing, from the conviction that she must soon be a nameless outcast !

She had again recourse to prayer, and she again rose from her devotions, strengthened and resigned.

At that moment a gentle tap at the door was heard, and Algernon entered.

“ I must see you, I must speak to you, Ellen ! Human nature cannot endure this continued state of effort. Let us unbend for a few short moments. Tell me you love me, and that, let our fate be what it may, your heart, your whole heart, is mine.”

“ Oh, Algernon ! I have just been praying for strength and resignation, and I thought I

had obtained my prayer. Do not speak to me in those tender tones. They melt away my whole soul, and I will, I will be firm. I must no longer allow myself to use such expressions ; but I cannot even try not to feel all, and more than I ever felt before. Spare my weakness, Algernon, and remember that dearly as I prize your love, I prize your good opinion still more. That is the one thought which enables me to exist, I believe."

He looked on her with admiration, almost amounting to awe.

"My good opinion! You are as much superior to me, or to any other living being, as the angels of Heaven are to the common run of mortals. I adore you, I venerate you, as one of them." He knelt at her feet.

"Speak, and I will obey you. I place myself under your guidance. I will regulate my actions by what you deem calculated to ensure your own peace of mind. I will prove to you that I can equal you at least in self-devotion ; though my heart may break, I will not yield to you in that !"

"Get up, Algernon. Do not kneel at my

feet. I cannot bear to hear you speak in such a manner. These scenes must not recur. We only agonize each other, and render ourselves unfit for our task. Leave me, dearest ; leave me to compose myself !”

“ You bid me leave you, and I will do so. But will you not give me your hand ? That dear hand which, after all, was pledged to me at the altar !” He took her unresisting hand. “ It was I who placed that ring upon your finger, Ellen ; you then swore to me eternal fidelity, you swore to love me ‘ till death us did part.’ Can any thing cancel that vow ?” And he drew her gently towards him.

“ O God ! nothing, nothing !” She dashed his hand from her, and rushed to the opposite corner of the room. She glared wildly upon him. — “ Nothing, nothing can cancel that first dreadful vow ! Oh ! do not remind me of those words. It was then the vision came over me ! He, who you tell me is my husband, seemed to rise up between us, Alger-non ! It was a forewarning of what was to happen ! I ought to have obeyed the warn-

ing — I should have stopped before” — her voice faltered, but she continued in a tone of unutterable sweetness — “before those words made me the happiest woman in the whole world !” She hid her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

“ Bless you for what you have just said, my own Ellen !”

“ Do not call me your own Ellen ; I am not — can never be ! In mercy leave me — this agony is not to be endured !”

Slowly and reluctantly he withdrew : he stood for a few moments at the door, and then he closed it, and she remained alone.

She had prayed for strength, and she found it. She did not weep, but meekly sat, patient and uncomplaining. The hour for dressing arrived, and she mechanically proceeded with her toilet. Her maid had prepared the dress, the ornaments she thought she would wear. Mechanically she sate before the looking-glass, mechanically she arranged her ringlets round her face : she placed in her hair the ornamental comb her maid presented to her,

fastened her ear-rings, held out her arm to have her bracelets clasped, and, when she was dressed, wondered at herself for having tricked herself out in all these gewgaws.

“How strange,” she thought, “that I should have been able thus to deck this wretched form !” But such is the force of habit : it does not come into anybody’s head to leave off the feathers, the diamonds, the flowers with which they are in the habit of adorning themselves, though the heart beneath may be breaking—and yet it seems a mockery !

Before dinner Lady Coverdale begged that the children might be sent for, and little Agnes appeared in a beautiful cap which Miss Coverdale had embroidered for her. The beauty of the child’s eyes was discussed.

“If Agnes grows up according to this promise, Mrs. Hamilton”—(Ellen started at the name)—“you will have a pleasant task in acting as her chaperon.”

Ellen almost sank at the prospect which was thus brought before her. She could not an-

swer, but, hastily turning away, stirred the fire with great energy, at the same time exclaiming how hot it was.

They went to dinner ; she was seated at the head of the table, opposite to Mr. Hamilton. She felt a sort of melancholy pleasure in being, as it were, forced to appear as his wife ; but never did two such bursting hearts pass calmly through an evening of society.

Another day succeeded, and it was spent in the same struggle. On the third the Co-verdales departed, thinking that, for so happy a couple, they were the most fashionably cool they had ever seen ; the Allenhams, fearing that Mr. Hamilton, charming as he was, must have an odd corner of temper, for, as to Ellen, they knew her too well to imagine for a moment that she could be in fault.

They all drove from the door, and the wretched couple were left alone with their love and their misery.

“ And now *you* must leave me, Algernon : we must not remain here alone, and I even doubt whether I ought to remain under your roof.”

“ Oh, Ellen ! one would think you wished

to believe we were severed, for ever severed !
There is still hope."

"None for me ! I know that hand-writing too well."

"Must I go to-day ?"

"To-day, if you value my peace, and the little remnant of honour I may yet hope to preserve."

"This is hard, this is cruel ; but you shall have an approving conscience, my own Ellen ; and if your conscience will be easier when I am gone, I will not linger : I will order everything for my journey, and I will go at dusk to-night. Till then, you will let me be with you ; till then, I may look on your face—I may listen to your voice—I may breathe the same air with you !"

He flew to order his departure, and in another instant was by her side.

There was a melancholy satisfaction in being together, and yet, when they were so, they could not speak : what could they say that was not fraught with wretchedness ?"

"I must see our children, Ellen."

He had been in the habit of calling all the children "our;" but the little word, which from the force of habit escaped him, struck daggers to the hearts of both. The two elder were his children who might soon be at home to claim them.

They all three came, and poor Hamilton devoured them with kisses. The little Agnes was just old enough to know him, and to hold out her arms to him with a smile of joy. They could neither of them endure this long; they could not talk to the children—they could not play with them—they could not listen to their prattle, and they were soon sent away.

Strange to say, these last few hours, whose flight they so much dreaded, hung heavy. They wished to arrest the course of time, and yet they knew not how to pass it. They strolled into the garden: everything there spoke of hope and promise; everything within their own bosoms boded unheard-of wretchedness.

They had several times paced in silence round the sheltered parterre, when Ellen turn-

ed deadly pale, and stopped for a few moments.

“ You must lean on me, Ellen ! You must take my arm.”

Her feebleness compelled her to do so, and once more he had the happiness of feeling that lovely form rest on him for support.

Neither spoke again. Both hearts were too full for utterance. In silence they bent their course homeward. They again returned to the drawing-room. They once more sat down there together. They could not bring themselves to quit each other for a moment,—to lose one instant of these few precious hours ; and yet to each, the presence of the other was oppressive. This state of misery and *gêne* was worse than that occasioned by the presence of others.

They could not, at such a moment, speak on indifferent subjects ; and if they alluded to their own situation, it must lead to passionate bursts of feeling, which she considered as criminal, and which he also dreaded for her sake.

At length the hour of departure came. The

carriage was announced—and he went up-stairs alone once more to give his parting blessing to the children. He returned to her.

“I think we may correspond,” she said, “there can be nothing wrong in that, till our fate is quite decided.”

“Oh yes, yes; you must write every day,” he replied. “I shall find out some retired spot in Wales, and I shall remain there in utter seclusion till your mind is made easy by hearing no more. In three months you will conclude it was only a forgery?”

She shook her head. “I know the writing.”

“In six months? In a year, you will—name some time—set some term to my banishment!”

“We will write—I am not capable of knowing or understanding what is right in your presence. You must leave me, Algernon, or I think I shall die, now, at your feet!”

“And are we to part thus?”

She stood like a marble statue, as cold, as pale, as motionless.

“Are we to part thus? Impossible!” and he snatched her to his bosom, and imprinted

on her lips one kiss of deep, fervent, unalterable love.

He tore himself away, and plunging into the carriage, in a few moments was borne far from the scene of all his happiness.

When she heard the sound of the wheels, she made a desperate rush to the window, and remained fixed there to listen for their sound, and to fancy she still heard it, long after it was possible to do so.

CHAPTER IX.

From our own paths, our love's attesting bowers,
I am not gone,
In the deep hush of midnight's whispering hours
Thou art not lone !
Not lone when by the haunted stream thou weepest,
That stream whose tone
Murmurs of thoughts the holiest and the deepest
We two have known.

MRS. HEMANS.

HE was gone—quite gone—and slowly and wearily she dragged herself back to the sofa, and gave free vent to all the agony which had been eating away her very being.

She was thus drowned in tears, when the footman entered the room, upon some pretence of closing the shutters or of making up the fire. The servants could not but perceive that something unusual was going on, and

their curiosity was excited by the mysterious looks of their master and mistress, and by the sudden departure of the former. Ellen, to avoid the inquiring gaze of the footman, hastily retired to her boudoir, whither she had no sooner retreated than her anxious maid peeped in to see if she might want any thing.

Pleading a violent head-ache, she bade her say she should not require any dinner, and assured her that nothing but entire quiet could relieve the pain under which she was suffering. The faithful creature would prescribe all the nostrums that ever were invented for head-aches, and poor Ellen thought she never should be allowed to weep in peace. At length she was relieved from the troublesome attentions both of the inquisitive, and of the kind-hearted, and was left to her own sad thoughts.

She accused herself of not having sufficiently valued the one last morning she had passed with him. She remembered a thousand things she meant to say—a thousand things she ought to have said. She thought she had been cold, she thought she had been unkind, and yet she reproached herself for having allowed him

to take that one farewell kiss ; for she felt and knew she was not his wife. She could not deceive herself into a momentary belief that the letter was an imposture. She knew that her lawful husband was alive, and that every feeling of her soul was therefore criminal. Still, though she scarcely indulged a hope of ever being re-united to Algernon, she had not the courage to declare the truth. She wished, if possible, to preserve her reputation, and her child's position in the world.

She now had leisure to reflect upon the line of conduct it behoved her to adopt, and she came to the conclusion, that, provided she received no further communication from Mr. Cresford, and that there seemed no fear of open exposure, the only mode of preserving her fair name, and her virtue at the same time, was to induce Mr. Hamilton to consent to an amicable separation on the score of incompatibility of temper.

This was her best hope ! How dreadful the other alternative ! to be claimed by the indignant Cresford, to be held up to the eyes of the world as a base culprit, guilty of the crime

of bigamy! It was almost too degrading to contemplate.

Some days had now elapsed; she had every morning received the letters with a sickening dread which almost paralyzed her. With fear and horror she had hastily turned over the exterior of every letter, and, with inexpressible relief, she had found none that bore the dreaded foreign post-mark. Each morning brought a long epistle from Algernon, written in the spirit of the highest, purest, most devoted affection.

These were some balm to her heart. These were treasured up and perused over and over again. But she was an altered creature—all around wondered at the change. The children found that mamma could only kiss them, and weep over them, and they became thoughtful and subdued in her presence. The poor people wondered their bounteous lady no longer came among them. She could not do so. She dreaded the eyes of her fellow-creatures — their very blessings were painful to her—she felt as if she had obtained them under false pretences. All that had given her pleasure in this lovely place,

this delightful country, now only filled her with regret, when she thought that the next day might find her an exile from this Paradise. Every walk, every tree, every view, every spot she visited, reminded her of him whom she no longer ventured to call husband, and with whom she had no hope of ever seeing them again.

Two or three weeks had now slowly dragged their weary length away, and no fresh intelligence had arrived. It was nearly a month since she had received the first, and she almost began to think he found it impossible to make his escape. The friendly Governor might be removed. The mental aberration might, from over-excitement, have returned. She felt wicked in, for a moment, anticipating such a circumstance with any thing approaching to satisfaction ; and yet the horror of another, and still more appalling, solution of the difficulty, that he had succeeded in his petition, and that he was on his way home, filled her with dismay which almost bewildered her senses.

One morning when she, as usual, received with trembling hands the packet of letters,

she perceived one from her brother with an enclosure. With dizzy eyes she tore open the cover, and within found another, with the same dreaded post-mark of Gratz. Despair gave her courage to open it. It was indeed from Cresford, and he there told her the Governor had proved his kindest friend; that the Emperor had listened favourably to his petition, and that he had every prospect of being able to commence his journey to England in a few days,—that as the time approached he felt ten thousand fears pass through his bosom. How much might have happened since he left his home. His Ellen, to whom he was now writing in the fulness of his heart, might possibly be gathered to the dead. His children! were they still in existence? “Oh, my dearest wife,” he continued, “you can form no conception of the distracted and confused state of my mind when I think of the changes that may have taken place among you. Of one thing I believe I may rest assured, though my own wayward disposition has sometimes been prone to unreasonable bursts of—jealousy, shall I say?—no, rather sensitiveness,—for you will do me

the justice to confess I never was jealous of any individual,—of one thing I may rest assured, that I shall find you pure, true, and virtuous as I left you. The knowledge of your virtue has been my only consolation,—that conviction alone has supported me through all my misfortunes. In one short month I shall be at home, my Ellen, never, never again to part from you.”

This confirmation of what she most dreaded came upon her with almost as great a shock as the first announcement of her misery. Yet she felt ungrateful at making such a return for all the affection expressed by Cresford, affection which had stood the test of time, which had been his guiding principle in absence, imprisonment, even in madness.

The next moment she fancied that by such emotions she wronged Algernon, her own adored Algernon, who was, for ever, torn from her, and doomed to sufferings equal to her own.

In another month Cresford said he should be at home. The time had nearly elapsed : he might arrive any day. There was not a moment to be lost !

In her distraction she almost forgot to open the daily letter of Mr. Hamilton. It breathed of hope ! He had always been more sanguine than herself, and in this he pleaded strongly to be allowed to return. He argued that the protracted silence almost proved, beyond a doubt, that the whole had been a false alarm.

She placed the dear letter next her heart, and, hastily gathering together the rest of her correspondence which had been cast aside, was preparing to arrange all things for her instant departure, when her attention was arrested by a second epistle from her brother Henry. She knew the worst ; she had no more to fear, and she perused it with a desperate calmness.

Henry began by saying that he, and all the other partners, had been much distressed by a communication they had received of so strange a character that he scarcely liked to disturb her mind by reporting it ; that yet, as he had forwarded to her by the same post a letter which appeared to come from the same quarter as the one they had received, and as, if he mistook not, he had some time ago sent her another with a similar direction and post-mark,

perhaps she might be prepared for what he was going to tell her.

The fact was they had received a letter purporting to come from Mr. Cresford, and full of incomprehensible allusions to an escape from Verdun, and to a mock funeral; that they scarcely knew whether to consider it a forgery or not; that he grieved to say those who were most conversant with his hand-writing seemed most persuaded of its authenticity; that they were all in the greatest perplexity, but, upon the whole, agreed it was best to keep the circumstance secret for the present.

He dreaded to think what her feelings must be; that for himself, he was firmly convinced it was an imposture from first to last,—that he remembered how circumstantial had been Colonel Eversham's account of the funeral of poor Cresford, performed by torch-light, according to his own particular request, and attended by Colonel Eversham himself, by Captain Morton, and several more of the *détenus* who were on parole. “And do you not remember his dwelling upon the awful circumstance, that in one short week from the time Captain Morton had

acted as chief mourner at Cresford's interment, he was himself committed to the grave? Do not worry yourself, therefore, my dearest sister. Depend upon it, it is a trick, with the view of extorting money; but I thought it would not be right to leave you in ignorance of the unpleasant doubt.

"I should have been myself the bearer of this strange despatch, but I am unavoidably detained in town to-day by business. I will be with you soon after you receive this."

"It is all true," she thought to herself, "and it is all known. It must now be published abroad; there is no escape!" and she looked wildly around her. This was no moment for deliberation or indecision.

She commanded post horses to be instantly sent for; she summoned her maid; she desired the nurses, the children, the *bonne*, to prepare instantly for a sudden journey, and she sat down to write the appalling news to Algernon, to dash all the hopes which he had fostered, to doom him also to a future as blank and cheerless as her own.

She began, "I have scarcely the power to

write what I am now compelled to impart to you. In a few more hours I shall have left this beloved home ; in a few more hours I shall be an outcast from this blessed place, where I have lived as your most happy, and your honoured wife. Thank you, Algernon, for the unutterable happiness I have for two years enjoyed ; thank you for all your love, all your tenderness.

“ I am going to my father. Poor man ! he little knows the shame and misery which await the decline of his life ; he who so valued the opinion of the world ! Oh, Algernon, I am doomed to bring a curse on all who are connected with me ! I shall bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave ; I have cast a blight over the dignified and prosperous career which awaited you ; I have been the bane of that unhappy man whose ungoverned, ill-fated love for me led him to practise the deceit which has worked us all so much woe. My name will be a lasting disgrace to my children,—all of them !

“ Algernon ! when I think of you, my heart is near breaking ; when I think of your

return to your desolate home, when I know how you will miss me,—for I judge too well from my own, what your feelings will be,—when I think how you will miss the children, too ! Heavens, I have just ordered the nurse to prepare herself and Agnes for our sad journey !—But what right have I to do so ? She is your child, Algernon, and shall I deprive you of that one consolation ? Shall I deprive her of an honourable station to drag her with me into shame and degradation ? No ! my wretchedness can scarcely know increase, and you shall be greeted on your return by her smiles, her out-stretched arms, her lovely attempts to prattle. I leave you that precious legacy. She will remind you of her who loves you still with tenfold fervour, though it is now a crime to do so.

“ There is a sort of pleasure in sacrificing something to you : you shall keep her and cherish her. I expect my brother every moment : he and the other members of the house have likewise received communications from Gratz. I cannot add another word—I cannot sign myself,—for, oh ! what name do I now bear ? ”

She hastily sealed her letter, and, without giving herself time to retract, she flew upstairs, and told the nurse that she and Agnes were to remain at Belhanger — that only George and Caroline were to accompany her. The nurse was astonished at the sudden change ; but her mistress looked so ghastly and so wild, she did not venture any question or any remark. Ellen snatched her child to her heart—kissed it with such vehemence that the terrified creature screamed—then, almost thrusting it again into the nurse's arms, she rushed out of the room, not daring to trust herself another moment in its sight.

She now hastened into her own apartments, and, without allowing herself time for tender emotions or reminiscences, she began to pack up her papers, her letters, a few favourite books of devotion, some of the many tokens of affection she had received from Algernon, and above all, his picture—that picture which she gazed upon every day, ten times every day, during his absence.

While thus employed, she saw her maid arranging her diamonds, and other jewels, for the journey.



"Do not put up those," she said in a clear, calm voice; "they must be left here."

"Dear ma'am, we always take them with us wherever we go; I always think they are safest when they are under my own eye."

"They must remain, Stanmore," answered Ellen almost sternly.

"Just as you please, ma'am, certainly," replied the abigail, whose feelings on the subject of the diamonds were so acute that she could not look with indifference upon anything that concerned them, although she saw something had certainly happened which greatly discomposed her mistress, and was really tenderly attached to her.

"Would you please to leave all the trinkets, ma'am?" she added with rather a mortified, injured accent.

"No, Stanmore; I must take these rings, these bracelets, all these things—they were all given to me by dear friends."

"I am sure, ma'am, I should have thought you might have wished what Mr. Hamilton had given you to go along with us."

"Say no more, Stanmore; I cannot bear

it.—Only make haste,—all possible haste!—
I must go to my father to-day.”

“ Dear me ! I beg your pardon, ma’am ; but
is Captain Wareham ill ?

“ No—Yes—I am not sure—I believe he is
pretty well.”

Ellen left the room, having secured the
few articles she much valued ; and having
told Stanmore to carry the diamonds to the
housekeeper, and bid her give them to Mr.
Hamilton when he returned.

“ How strange ! ” said Mrs. Stanmore to
herself. “ Master and Mistress must have
quarrelled desperately, somehow or another.
And to think how loving they did seem to
be till just at last ! Well, they say such vio-
lent love is too hot to hold. I shall think
of that when next Mr. Perkins says a civil
word to me, and give him a civil word in
return, for all he is not the man of my heart ;
for it’s my belief all the love should be on
the man’s side. How well my poor Mistress
and Mr. Cresford went on, though he was so
queer ; and now she has got a husband she
loves, this is the end of it all ! Ah ! it does

not do to make too much of the men. If one has a man one does not care for, one has one's wits about one, to know how to manage him."

While Mrs. Stanmore was making these sage reflections, (in which there is much deserving attention from the young and inexperienced,) Ellen, who could not sit still, and who was afraid to trust herself with her child, wandered like an unquiet spirit about the house, longing to visit every well-known room, and to bid each a sad adieu; but she met servants in every direction carrying trunks and imperials in all the bustle of departure.

She took refuge in her boudoir, from which the few things she meant to carry with her were already removed. She looked round in silence and in calmness. There was not an object which did not remind her of some act of kindness of Algernon's. A tap at the door startled her from the abstraction in which she stood.

Mrs. Topham, the stately housekeeper, made her appearance.

"If you please, ma'am, I come for orders

during your absence. If you thought, ma'am, you should be away some little time, the furniture in the chintz-room wants washing sadly, and perhaps, ma'am, it would be a good opportunity to get it calendered."

"Do just as you please, Mrs. Topham. I cannot attend to those things at this moment."

"Certainly, ma'am, I would not trouble you for the world; but Miss Mason wished to know whether you would have them go on with master's neckcloths, or whether you wished the table-linen to be put in hand immediately at the school."

"Oh yes, Mrs. Topham."

"What, the table-linen? or the neckcloths, did you mean, ma'am?"

"Either: it matters little! Mr. Hamilton will be at home in a few days, and he will tell you. I am very ill, Mrs. Topham. I cannot—I cannot answer you." And tears for the first time that morning flowed from her eyes.

There is nothing so strange as the causes which open the flood-gates of woe. The vexation of being troubled with these trifles, and

the feeling that she had no longer a right to regulate them, that it would no longer be her care to see to all these little household details, melted her to tears, when all the deep and overwhelming bearings of the case had not produced an inclination to weep.

Mrs. Topham departed, surprised, grieved, and a little offended.

“ She never knew her mistress in such a way before. She had always behaved so considerate to her, and spoken in such a kind and feeling way, she was sure there was something wrong, and that her mistress had something upon her mind.”

Ellen now thought she would once more see his study. She should there be safe from intrusion, and she would look at every thing, and fix it so firmly in her memory, that it should serve as a sort of picture to which her mind's eye might at any time recur. She marked every chair and table, the very pattern of the cornice, the mouldings on the book-cases, the carving of the chimney-piece. She touched all the papers, the parliamentary re-

ports which crowded the table, and which might have been touched by him.

At this moment a chaise drove up to the door, and her brother Henry leaped out of it. In another moment Ellen was in his arms, and clinging to him in the full abandonment of long pent-up sorrow, which at length is allowed free vent. There was a degree of relief in the presence of one to whom she might unburthen her whole soul, from whom she need have no secrets, and with whom she need be under no restraint.

This weakness, however, was not of long duration. She quickly shook it off, and rousing herself, she uttered in a firm though hurrying manner :

“ We must be gone directly, Henry. You will take me to my father’s ; you will go with me, dear brother, will you not ? ”

“ Where is Hamilton ? ” he answered.

“ He has not been here since I received the first packet you enclosed me. We parted then ! ” She pressed her hand for a moment tightly upon her eye-balls.

"Do you then consider the case so hopeless, my poor dear sister?"

"Alas! I have from the very first, although he would scarcely believe me."

"Oh, dreadful! dreadful! What is to be done?"

"I must go to my father, and I must leave the rest to Providence. I have not wittingly done wrong, so I hope God will assist me to bear that with which it is his pleasure to visit me!"

"My poor, poor Ellen!"

"Do not pity me, Henry! I have prayed for strength, and hitherto I have been mercifully supported. Do not pity me, or I shall not be able to go through what must be done this day."

"Ellen! By Heavens you are the most high-minded, courageous, and noble, as well as the gentlest and loveliest creature I ever saw! Whatever the result may be, you are certainly doing what is right. I am ready to accompany you."

"Every thing is prepared, Henry. I have

only one task left, that of bidding adieu to my baby—my little Agnes !”

“ Do you leave her behind you ?”

“ I cannot rob Algernon of that which will remind him of me, and yet give him pleasure, instead of pain. Neither will I heap more shame and disgrace on my child’s head than is unavoidable.”

Ellen left him, and with a slow and heavy step she for the last time mounted the oak staircase. She went to the nursery, and solemnly taking the child away, she carried it into the room which was her own. Bolting all the doors, she knelt as she held the infant in her arms, and offered up for it prayers as fervent and as pure as ever ascended to the throne of grace. Then kissing its eyes, its forehead, its lips.

“ May the God of mercy bless thee, my babe ! may He bless thee with virtue, principle, rectitude : whatever may be thy fate in this world, may He bring thee to that place where the wicked cease from troubling, where the weary are at rest !”

She rose from her knees, and carried the child back to the nurse. In a calm and steady voice, she bade her, as she valued her peace of mind here and hereafter, to do her duty by the infant ; and begging God to bless them both, she steadily went down the stairs, and without looking to the right, or to the left, passed through the hall. When she reached the door, she paused, and turning round, she saw the servants who, half wonder, half sympathy, had collected at the different doors, and were pressing forward. She tried to speak—her voice failed her ; she made another effort, and at length uttered,

“ You have all done your duties by me, and may God reward you for it ! ”

A burst of tears and sobs, they scarcely themselves knew wherefore, was all the answer they could make.

Henry supported her into the carriage. Her elder children and their attendants entered the other, and she was rapidly conveyed from a spot, where she had endured the two extremes of mortal bliss, and mortal woe.

CHAPTER X.

En songe, souhaid, et pensée,
Vous voye chacun jour de sepmaine
Combien qu'estes de moi loingtaine
Belle très loyaument amée.

Du tout vous ay m'amour donnée ;
Vous en povez être certaine,
Ma seule dame souveraine,
De mon las cœur moult désirée
En songe, souhaid, et pensée.

CHARLES DUC D' ORLEANS, A. D. 1446.

How did poor Hamilton meanwhile pass the time of his weary exile? It would have been wretchedness to him to have been recognized, to have been obliged to answer the usual inquiries after his wife and children, with which a married man is invariably greeted; to endure all the common courtesies of life. Yet his acquaintance was so general, his name so

well known, from having on many occasions borne a prominent part in politics, and from having lived much in the world, that he could scarcely find a spot where he would not be exposed to them.

He therefore, under an assumed name, retired to the most desolate fishing village he could find in the neighbourhood of M——, and passed his days wandering upon the shore, and mixing with none but the fishers, who plied their dangerous trade upon the wild Welsh coast.

Every morning he walked into the town, and claimed his letters at the post-office, then hurried to the shore, there to feast upon the lines traced by his beloved Ellen's hand. The enthusiastic turn of mind, which we at first described him as possessing, enabled him, better perhaps than another man, to endure the life of abnegation of self, which he here led. His passion was of so pure, so refined a character, that in sober truth, he had rather sit alone on a sea-girt rock, and think of her whom he worshipped with so holy a love, than be in

the society of any other living being, however lovely, however fascinating.

Weeks however elapsed, and even his highly wrought nature was beginning to tire of this protracted uncertainty. He formed a thousand desperate plans ; he nearly convinced himself that they were both sacrificing their happiness to a frivolous punctilio ; that Mr. Cresford never would return—that if he did, still in the eye of Heaven she was his, not Cresford's wife, and that there would be no guilt in their flying to the uttermost parts of the earth, and there existing for each other alone.

But although he might think such thoughts, he never ventured to commit them to paper when writing to her. He never again proposed their living together, if their union was not sanctioned by the laws. There was a spotless lofty purity about her that he dared not outrage by word, or look. He knew also, that even supposing he should succeed in persuading her to fly with him, still, that with her disposition, her religious principles, she could never find happiness in his devotion, if remorse

was an inmate of her bosom. He had courage to endure all ills, rather than to meet her reproachful eye;—to feel he had caused that innocent heart to know the pangs of a wounded conscience;—to feel that her religion, which was now her only source of consolation, had, through his means, been converted into a source of terror. The romantic adventures and feelings of his own early life, did not lead to his experiencing the same orthodox scruples himself, but the enthusiastic devotedness of his disposition made him respect them, even while he thought them over-strained.

His despair, therefore, when he received Ellen's last communication, knew no bounds. It destroyed his only hope. He paced the shore. It was a stormy morning, as if in accordance with his feelings: the sea-gull, with its wide-spread wings, gleaming white against the lead-coloured clouds, screamed as it passed over his head. The surf was wildly beating against the beach. The fisher vessels which had been out all night, were striving to regain the land, before the threatening storm burst upon them. He looked upon the little

boats as they neared the shore with an emotion of envy.—“Perhaps,” he thought, “perhaps the next few waves may swallow up the brave fellows, who are there exerting themselves to preserve life. They know not for what a miserable possession they are struggling. They know not what may await them if they escape the present danger! Blighted affections, ruined hopes, the torture of losing those they love, or of seeing them exist in wretchedness, may bring them to regret they had not now sunk, secure from experiencing any more of the sufferings human nature is heir to. Would I were in one of those boats! It would be no sin of mine if the waves were to close over it.”

The wives and mothers of the fishermen, who were inured to the venturous life of their relatives, proceeded with their ordinary toil. They had so often seen them weather a storm in safety, that they felt little alarm at what would have struck others as awful. One young woman, however, stole forth alone; her loose cloak shivered in the wind; the wild gust brought with it the spray

and dashed it in her face, but still her eyes were strained to catch a glimpse of one frail bark. She knew not that her bonnet was blown back, that her dishevelled hair streamed upon the blast. She gradually drew nearer to the spot where Algernon stood in his desperate musing.

She was a stranger: a girl from the midland counties, who had married one of the hardy young fishermen of this secluded village, and she was not yet accustomed to let the blast howl unheeded round her dwelling, while he she loved was on the wide salt sea.

She approached Algernon. In her loneliness she felt safer when near a fellow-creature.

"Do you think there is any danger, sir?" she said in a hesitating voice.

"The storm seems to be gathering," he answered; "but most likely you have more experience than I have."

"I have not been here long," she said, "and those great waves, with foamy tops, always terrify me sadly."

"Are you anxious for any one at sea, my good girl?"

"My husband, sir, is in one of those boats."

"And does he love you? Do you love him, and are you lawfully married?"

"Oh, sir! to be sure we are!" and she drew back abashed, and half angry.

"Then—then you are not to be pitied. In life or in death you are his. You are bound together by the ties of love and of duty, of religion and of law! He will return to you, my girl. See, the boats are getting nearer every moment. They will beat the storm—you will be reunited. You need not weep."

He darted away among the rocks, and sought the little room in the single ale-house, which had been his home for the last month.

His first impulse was to return to Belhanger—to revisit the spot which breathed of her, and having once more beheld the precious child which she had left there as a pledge of her affection for him, to send her with the nurse to rejoin her mother at Captain Wareham's. His resolution was no sooner taken than it was executed.

Ellen and her brother had ere this arrived at the end of their journey. They reached Captain Wareham's just as he, Matilda, and the Allenhams, who were at this moment paying him their annual visit, were seated at their dessert. They were surprised at hearing an unusual bustle in the house, and still more so when Ellen, leaning on her brother, entered the apartment. They all pressed round to greet her. Matilda, with youthful delight at this agreeable surprise—Caroline and her husband with kindness—Captain Wareham with some kindness, but more annoyance, which annoyance was, however, in some degree tempered by the respect he had felt for Ellen, ever since she had made so good a marriage as he considered that to Mr. Hamilton.

“ Well, my dear Ellen, this is really very good of you to take us so by surprise, but you certainly do take us by surprise. I do not know how in the world we are to lodge you, and the dinner is just gone. And you, too, Henry ?” (annoyance was rapidly preponderating,) “ I do not know what we can do with you. And I suppose Hamilton is of

the party ; you might have given one a line. I should have thought, Ellen, you must have remembered how inconvenient this kind of thing is, in a small establishment."

By this time Ellen had sunk in a chair, and Caroline began to be alarmed at her paleness, and at the altered expression of her countenance. The children had just landed from their vehicle, and their voices were heard in the passage.

"Mercy on us! and the children, too!" exclaimed poor Captain Wareham, in a tone of despair, annoyance having thoroughly mastered the vague respect inspired by the superior style of all which surrounded the Hamiltons. "Well, this certainly is rather inconsiderate, Ellen; but when people make great matches, they grow fine, and you seem quite to forget your poor old father's means are not quite so ample as Mr. Hamilton's."

He turned round, but started at the ghastly appearance of Ellen. Henry had suffered agonies for his sister, and had tried to lead his father aside, that he might briefly explain to him the case, without proclaiming it to the

whole household. Ellen answered with the composure of despair.

“ You must let me stay in this house, father, —I do not care where—only I must have the shelter of your paternal roof.”

“ I can go to the inn perfectly well, dear father,” added Henry.

“ And Ellen can have her old room,” interposed Matilda ; “ little Caroline can sleep with me, and George can sleep on the sofa in Mr. Allenham’s dressing-room ; and now it is all arranged, so don’t you be cross, papa. Ellen looks quite ill, and I dare say she is faint for want of something to eat, so leave it all to me, and don’t make a fuss, that’s all, papa,” and she gave her father a playful tap on the cheek. She was a high-spirited, warm-hearted, ingenuous girl, in many respects the precise opposite of her sisters. If her father was cross, her spirit rose ; and she consequently possessed that sort of control over him, which the most decided, positive, and wilful, generally obtains over the less resolute temper, whatever may be their relative positions. She was also an excellent manager, always had cold meat in the

house, and was never at a loss for an expedient on any emergency.

Caroline was exceedingly uneasy at the appearance of Ellen, and remembered her fainting fits when she had been last at Belhanger. Her look of settled grief, coupled with the absence of Mr. Hamilton, made her fear that, notwithstanding the affection which had formerly subsisted between them, their quarrel must have been a serious one, and that her unannounced arrival must mean that they were separated. She found, also, that only the two Cresford children accompanied her; and this served to confirm her fears.

Even Captain Wareham began to be alarmed at the subdued yet resolute manner of Ellen; and looked from one to the other, perplexed, amazed, and annoyed.

"I suppose you want something to eat, Ellen?"

"No, father! I could not touch any thing."

"And the children must have supper."

"Matilda, you will give them some tea, poor little things?" she answered, turning towards Matilda.

"I could not eat a mouthful either," said Henry, "so do not get any thing for me, father. I wish you would just step this way, I want to consult you which inn I had best go to."

"My dear boy, it is very chilly to-night, and you may just as well consult me here by the fire."

"Ellen," added Henry, "would you not be better up-stairs on the sofa? Ellen is not well, father, and we must take great care of her!"

"You do not seem well indeed, Ellen. Why you look ten years older, girl, than when I saw you last!"

Ellen had risen from her seat, and was mechanically obeying Henry in walking up-stairs, when he said,

"Do give Ellen your arm, Allenham, she is faint and weak. I have some things to arrange, and will follow you presently."

Captain Wareham, whose parental tenderness had been awakened by the expression of suffering in Ellen's face, was following also, when Henry laid his hand upon his arm,

and forcibly detained him. He closed the door after them. Captain Wareham turned round.

"What does all this mean, Henry? Really it is very disagreeable, and you quite frighten me; I wish you would not be so odd and mysterious."

"Listen to me, father. I scarcely know how to break to you the news I have to impart."

"Speak, for Heaven's sake. I always hate being kept in suspense."

"Cresford is alive! alive, and coming home, as he thinks, to the arms of his beloved wife!"

"Impossible, Henry! you are jesting;" and Captain Wareham attempted to smile; but he dropped powerless into his chair, and clasped his hands, adding. "If this is a jest, it is a cruel one!"

Henry then, in a few words, gave him an outline of the case, and told him that Ellen and he had agreed, that until Cresford arrived, and that the truth was past all hope of concealment, it was best to treat it as an amicable separation on the score of temper. Henry had advised Ellen not even to confide the truth

to Mrs. Allenhams; for amiable and kind-hearted as she was, still she was not free from an inclination to gossip, and she would never be able to prevent such a secret from escaping her lips, to some of her old and dear friends in her native place.

Captain Wareham, whose good heart and high feeling of honour rendered him, in fact, an estimable man, approved of all that his unfortunate daughter had done; and was cut to the soul when he looked forward to the miserable fate which probably awaited her.

“And when Cresford does return, Henry, how will he conduct himself? I dread his violence!”

“I dare say he will make her a liberal allowance,” answered Henry; “for he was always noble about money; but at the same time I cannot help fearing he will take the children from her. In common justice, he cannot visit upon her, farther than that, the consequences of his own rash imposture.”

“I hope not; but you were too young when he went to France, to know the full

violence of his character—the vehemence of his ungoverned passions. But we must go to my poor, poor unhappy child.”

Her sisters had been all kindness to Ellen, though Matilda, in her thoughtless fondness, had asked a thousand painful questions concerning Mr. Hamilton, her pet Agnes, &c. ; but Caroline, who was quite persuaded she understood the whole case perfectly, discreetly avoided every thing that led to such subjects, till Matilda went to see to her hospitable arrangements for their accommodation, and they were left alone.

“ Dearest Ellen !” Caroline then said, “ I was afraid it would come to this, when I left you a month ago. Who would ever have thought that Mr. Hamilton could have turned out so ill, for I am sure you could never have been the one to blame : nobody ever saw you out of temper in your life.”

Ellen looked up.

“ Breathe not a word against him, Caroline : he is the most perfect, the most faultless of human beings ! I always thought my

happiness was too great to last, and it has proved so. May Heaven, in its mercy, protect and bless him !”

“ Ah, you always were a gentle, forgiving creature !” answered Mrs. Allenham.

CHAPTER XI.

See the poor captive from his dungeon break,
Where long he pined, and hail the light of day,
With eyes that in the broad effulgence ache,
With smiles that 'mid deep lines of anguish play !
How eagerly he meets the morning gale
With lab'ring lungs that each sweet breath would seize !
How fondly views the hill, the plain, the vale,
Green meadows, brooks, fields, flow'rs, and waving trees !
And, " Gods !" he cries, " how dear is liberty !
Is there in Heaven's large gift a boon beside ?
The world is mine, and all the good I see !"
But soon, too soon, his raptures wild subside,
And sighing sad, " Not Freedom's self to me
Is sweet," he cries, " if one to share it be denied."

Unpublished Poems.

THE next day Henry was obliged to return to London : indeed, he wished to be upon the spot, in case of Mr. Cresford's arrival ; and Ellen was, on the same account, equally anxious he should depart.

Mrs. Allenham made several attempts to learn from Ellen the particulars of her separation; but Ellen assured her the subject was at present too painful to dwell upon; and they remained together in melancholy calmness not unmixed with *gêne*, for Caroline was somewhat hurt at Ellen's reserve.

She had one conversation with her father, in which he was all kindness and sympathy, and she now sat down to a task which she deemed one of absolute necessity, although of the utmost difficulty, namely, to write to Mr. Cresford a letter which should meet him on his arrival in London, and convey to him the dreadful intelligence, which sooner or later, must reach him.

It was as follows :—

“ I know not how to address you, and I dread lest you should have heard from some other quarter all that has occurred, and may cast aside the letter of one whom you deem untrue to you, without reading her own statement of the facts.

“ Believe me, when I swear by everything we

hold most sacred, that the first communication I received from you, from the time I read the official account of your death in the public newspapers, was the letter I received last month, dated from Gratz. I had then for two years believed myself the wife of Mr. Hamilton.

“ As I write these words, my spirit quails at the effect I know they must produce on you—my heart bleeds for the pain I am inflicting on you ; for, indeed, I do justice to the strength of your affection for me, and I grieve to be thus the cause of anguish to one who loves me ! It is a cruel return for all the fidelity you have preserved to me ; but you must know the truth, and I had rather you should learn it from me, than from common report,—from the busy tongue of slander.

“ Mr. Maitland never brought me the letter to which you allude. I have never seen any of your companions in misfortune, except Colonel Eversham, who told me how he followed your remains to the grave, and I have yet to learn by what means you effected your

escape from Verdun. For two years I mourned you in sincerity and truth. During all that time I regulated my conduct by what I supposed would have been your wishes, if you had been able to express them to me before your supposed death.

“Some months after the expiration of my two years’ mourning, I accepted the hand of Mr. Hamilton. You must feel, that, although this second marriage is null and void, and that in the eye of the law I am your wife, an eternal barrier is placed between yourself and me.

“Upon the reception of your first letter, Mr. Hamilton left me, and I have not seen him since. Upon the confirmation of this first letter, (in the authenticity of which we scarcely believed,) I removed with—the—two children to my father’s.” [She had at first written “*your* two children;” but she felt as if by that word she were tacitly yielding them up to him, and she substituted *our*. This she feared might imply that their re-union was not impossible, and she wrote *the*.] “Indeed, indeed, my conscience acquits me of having

wilfully done anything wrong, though I am aware I have cast a blight over the fate of all those whose happiness I would gladly die to secure. Would I could die ! But it is our duty to suffer and submit. Misfortune has, I hope, taught you likewise the duty of resignation. Pray, as I do, for strength to fulfil our pilgrimage here on earth in unrepining patience and humility, so that we may hereafter be deemed worthy of our Maker's promised blessings to those who do his will in this world. Our misfortunes have not originated in guilt : in that reflection let us find a supporting hope ; and rest assured that, had I known you to be living, no length of absence, no human power, no imaginable circumstances, should have shaken my adherence to my maiden vow of constancy : you should have found me as you left me—

“ Your faithful wife,

“ ELLEN CRESFORD.”

With what unutterable anguish did she write that name ! For some minutes she held the pen suspended before she summoned cou-

rage to trace the dreaded characters. Yet why, when her whole letter avowed herself his wife, why fear to write the word? She forced herself to do so; but as she wrote, she felt guilty towards Algernon. She had been so completely in the habit of doing every thing with reference to him, of being guided by him, of acting as if his eye was always upon her, that she thought what would be his emotions, if he saw her thus deliberately deny him! Yet this was indeed her name, and if she avoided it, she might irritate him who was in very truth her husband; him, who had a right at any moment to tear her children from her! She would no longer hesitate—she would not give herself the opportunity of altering the signature; she sealed the letter, she directed it, she enclosed it to her brother, and when all was done, she felt her separation from him she loved more complete than ever. A gush of tenderness came over her soul. If Algernon had at that moment been at her feet, there is no knowing whether she might not have consented to fly with him to the wilds of

America, or to any spot on earth where human institutions could not reach.

When Algernon arrived at Belhanger, a few days after Ellen's departure, he lost no time in sending little Agnes to rejoin her mother. He thought the presence of her child,—his child,—might afford her the sensation nearest approaching to pleasure of any thing she was now capable of experiencing. It was not without many a bitter pang that he brought himself to part from the only object that remained to him, of all that a few short weeks ago had made him the happiest man alive. But in addition to his anxiety to lessen by any means within his power the bitterness of her fate, it is possible that a lingering hope mingled itself, that she could not refuse to let him occasionally see his child, and that he might perhaps thus obtain an interview with herself.

His home was now utterly desolate. He wandered as she had done before, like an unquiet spirit, from room to room. He pictured to himself what must have been her feelings

when she tore herself from them. He longed to know how she had passed that last sad month; he wished for every trifling detail concerning her occupations, her looks, and yet he did not like to question the servants. He saw in their faces an expression of wonder and dismay; they moved about with stealthy steps, and spoke with subdued voices, while in the part of the house which he inhabited; or else, as he passed by the offices, he heard the loud laugh proceeding from the servants-hall, or the blithe carol of the laundry-maids over their wash-tub, which jarred his feelings, and he was tempted to exclaim mentally against the heartlessness of menials. Their curiosity, and their want of sympathy, both checked the inclination to question them concerning Ellen, which his restlessness caused frequently to arise in his bosom. Moreover, he scarcely knew in what terms to speak of her.

Mrs. Topham, however, spared him the trouble of deciding for himself. A few days after his return, she made her appearance to receive his orders about the furniture of the

chintz room, saying that Mrs. Hamilton had desired her to ask him what he wished to have done, and also to inquire his pleasure concerning the neck-cloths. He begged her to use her own discretion on those subjects, but still detained her in conversation, hoping she would, of her own accord, allude to Ellen.

Finding that Mrs. Topham's discourse was strictly confined to her business, he ventured at length to say,

"I am afraid your mistress was not quite well when she left Belhanger?"

"Why certainly, sir, Mrs. Hamilton did not look so well as she used to do. There was not a servant in the house that did not remark it. But it was very lonesome for her here by herself, and we thought perhaps that was the reason she appeared so low. I am sure, sir, we all heartily wished for you back again, if it was only for our poor mistress's sake."

Mrs. Topham, whose curiosity had only been repressed by her respectful discretion, had no mind to lose this opportunity of ascertaining whether her master and mistress

were really parted or not, and of satisfactorily clearing up the mystery of their late proceedings.

“I suppose, sir,” she continued, “my mistress will be coming back soon ; — do you not think it would be a good thing to get the muslin curtains in the boudoir washed before her return ?”

Poor Hamilton had wished to lead the conversation to Ellen, and now he had succeeded in doing so, he writhed under the questions,— he thought it better not to hear her name mentioned at all, than to be subject to them, and hastily bidding Mrs. Topham see to all those things in her own department, he hurried out to mount his horse, and to gallop like a maniac over the country, as if he could thus escape from the corroding care, which followed faster than he could fly.

When in violent exercise alone, did he experience temporary relief from misery. At home every thing breathed of Ellen, and though it was agonizing to him to see traces of her on all sides, he could not tear himself from the spot ; he would pass whole hours in

her morning room, looking over her books, turning over the leaves of the blotting book, in which were notes, memorandums, various little matters which belonged to her. He would gaze for several minutes upon any half-bound book, which had "Ellen Hamilton" written in her hand on the outside. Those two words contained for his heart a world of passionate and blasted feelings. The very household accounts were not without a charm in his eyes—for they perpetuated the memory of a time when she was his wife.

There is no need to dwell upon the emotions of Ellen when the nurse brought her child. The smiles of the infant and the letter which accompanied it, were a momentary balm to her heart. Algernon expressed his conviction that whatever their own fates might be, he could in no way so effectually secure the ultimate and eternal welfare of their child, as by causing its young mind to be trained to all that was virtuous, under Ellen's own immediate eye. She could not but be gratified by his opinion of her, and grateful for his kindness.

It was about a fortnight from the period of

their final separation, when Henry Wareham was one day called out of his office to speak to a gentleman who awaited him in a private apartment. Henry's heart misgave him. His worst fears were on the point of being realized. It must be Cresford.

The room was dark. Henry's eyes were dizzy with intense anxiety; he thought he did not recognise the face; but it was Cresford's voice which asked,

"Are you Henry Wareham?"

"Heavens! Cresford. Is it indeed yourself?"

"Where is my wife?" uttered Cresford in a choked tone of defiance.

"Ellen is with her father," stammered Henry.

"Why was she not here to receive her husband?" continued Cresford.

"Here is a letter, Cresford, which she desired me to give you, and which will explain all."

"Then what I have heard is true!" exclaimed Cresford in a burst of uncontrollable

passion. "Your virtuous sister thought I was safe in an Austrian dungeon, and she has given the loose to her profligate fancies, under the specious veil of marriage! Well done, your sanctified hypocrite! The mourning widow of Ephesus with a vengeance!" And he laughed an appalling, withering laugh, which made Henry shudder. His eyes glared with the fire of madness. Henry almost shrank with the involuntary terror from which the bravest cannot defend themselves if they suspect mental aberration in a fellow-creature.

"Cresford, read this letter, and I think you will not make use of such hard expressions. Though you may be miserable, you will not be so angry."

"So, because I have loved her with mad idolatry, because my passion for her has driven me to acts of desperation,—has driven me to set at nought my life—my safety, you think I am such a besotted fool, that three lines traced by her hand, are to turn the whole current of my feelings; that she can persuade me quietly to yield her to the arms of my rival." He

paused, then added in a deep and thrilling voice, "You neither of you know me. You know not half I have gone through."

"Cresford, all I implore is that you will read my sister's letter. We all believed you dead. The partners in the firm all believed it."

"It was their interest—it was your interest to do so," he answered with a bitter smile.

However, he took the letter.

"Oh, how I have longed to see any thing belonging to her. And now—"

A tear gathered in his eye. Henry augured well of that omen, and stood in silence, somewhat apart.

He had leisure to remark the havoc which time, and suffering, and as he began to fear, madness, had worked in the fine features of his brother-in-law. They were sharper, his nose more prominent, his lips thinner, and more compressed. His brow low on his eye, which glanced quickly and suspiciously from beneath it. Although still young, for Cresford was not yet thirty, his hair was considerably mixed with grey.

Henry watched the varying expression of his countenance as he proceeded with poor Ellen's letter, and he sincerely commiserated the wretched man, who was now a prey to the most agonizing passions of our nature—blasted hope—indignant jealousy.

When he came to the part in which she spoke of having for two years believed herself the wife of Mr. Hamilton, he stamped upon the floor, and crushing the paper in his clenched hand, Henry thought would have destroyed it, in the paroxysm of his rage. However, he proceeded, and a softer shade stole over his face when he read of her grief at making such a return for all his kindness and affection. A tear trickled down his cheek as he came to the part where she described her strict adherence to his wishes; and when she mentioned her having parted from Mr. Hamilton upon the reception of his first letter, he vehemently laid his hand on Henry's arm.

“Is this true?” he said. “Did she part from that man at once?”

“Indeed she did, and has not seen him since.”

“ Henry, did she love him?—answer me that.”

Henry hesitated — “ They seemed to live comfortably together, whenever I have seen them.”

“ Madness ! distraction ! Did they love each other ?”

“ I saw but little of them, for I was always in the office,” replied Henry evasively.

“ I must see her,—I must see her herself ; I must know the truth !” He resumed the letter, but hastily passing over that part which spoke of resignation, “ There is no use in preaching resignation to me ! She might as well attempt to chain the ocean !” He glanced at the signature. “ Oh, merciful Heaven ! that I could forget all that has gone before ; that I could annihilate the preceding words, and preserve nothing but the last, ‘ Your faithful wife, Ellen Cresford ! ’ ”

He gazed in rapturous tenderness upon the words ; his tears flowed fast ; he kissed the name again and again. Then hastily turning to Henry, he added, “ I must see her once again,

and then — God knows what will become of me !”

He rushed out of the house, and before many minutes had elapsed was on his road to Captain Wareham’s residence.

CHAPTER XII.

Shall then, in earnest truth,
My careful eyes observe her ?
Shall I consume my youth,
And short my time to serve her ?

Shall I, beyond my strength,
Let passion's torments prove me,
To hear her say at length
" Away,—I cannot love thee !"

GEORGE WITHER.—A.D. 1586.

ELLEN was one morning quietly seated in the back drawing-room which had been given up to her and her children ; the elder ones were employed, George in reading to his mother, and Caroline in working, seated on a stool at her feet, while the little Agnes was playing on the floor. Ellen heard a knock at the door. Every sound made her start. She heard a loud voice in the passage ! A voice ! His

voice ! Yes, it was his voice whom she had so long believed in the grave, uttering in loud and stern accents, "Show me to Mrs. Cresford,—I must instantly see her," and he darted by the servant up the stairs.

"Not into the front room, sir," the servant called out ; "there is company in the front room ! the back room, sir, if you please."

Cresford burst open the door, and stood before her, pale and haggard. She did not faint, she did not scream : she had risen from her seat, and she stood transfixed !

She was as beautiful as ever. Sorrow could but dim her brilliancy,—the finely chiselled features, the marble brow, the angelic expression, the feminine dignity, were all there. Cresford gazed in agonized admiration.

"How I have longed for this moment !—this moment, which proves one of torture ! Ellen, Ellen, you never loved me, or you could not have done what you have done. But I was resolved to see you again.—Yes, if Heaven and hell had conspired against me, I would have gazed upon that face again." She hid her face with her hands. "No," he said, and

forcibly removed them, "I will look upon those features. It was the recollection of those eyes, of that brow, those lips, which made me cling to life, while they induced me to hazard it a thousand times to gain another sight of them; it was to gaze on them that I practised the imposture by which I escaped from my prison; it was to gaze on them that I preserved my life, though treated as a spy, a prisoner, and a maniac!"

Ellen shook from head to foot. Fear, simple, deadly fear, absorbed every other feeling. She spoke not, she struggled not.

"Ellen, do you love me still? Have you thought of me in absence? Have you wept for me? Is your heart faithful?"

A horrible surmise crossed her. Surely he could not contemplate the idea of taking her back.—"Do you love me, Ellen?" he repeated, and he still held her hands.

"I pity you from the bottom of my heart."

"Do you love me?" and he dashed her hands from him.

"No!" she exclaimed, clasping them ear-

nestly, "No ! my whole heart, soul, and affections are Algernon's," and she sank on the floor.

"And do I live to hear you avow your guilt? Shameless, abandoned creature ! You, whom I so worshipped ! now, now,—in truth my brain will madden !" He struck his forehead with his clenched hands. Then looking round, "These are my children, are they not ? —I believed them mine. Yes, yes, they are mine, and mine they shall be ! Come with me, children ; you shall not remain to be contaminated by the example of a creature who glories in her shame. And this," he added, and lifted the little Agnes from the floor, "this, this is *his* child ! Take it,—take it, before I commit any crime I may repent of !" Ellen rushed to it, tore it from him, and hugged it to her bosom. "But these are mine !" he continued, and "these are mine, by every law of nature and of man !" He seized one in each hand. She flew to him, —she clung round his feet. He looked down on her in triumph.

“ Oh, spare my children ! Oh, Charles, have mercy upon me,” and she desperately held the children who clung round her.

At this moment Captain Wareham, who had heard the tumult, entered,

“ Captain Wareham, you see a man who claims his children—his children—by the law of the land, his ! I conclude you will not interfere with the exercise of my rights as a free-born Englishman.”

Ellen had sunk exhausted and sobbing on the floor, feeling that her father would protect her, and preserve her children.

“ Surely, Mr Cresford, this is not the manner in which an Englishman, and a gentleman, would enforce his rights.”

“ I have been taunted by that woman with her love for another man, and I cannot leave my children in her keeping. They must be delivered up to me.”

“ They shall—they shall, Mr. Cresford. I pledge myself that before evening they shall be sent to you, at any place you may appoint.”

"I am at the hotel opposite, sir, and there I await them within the next two hours."

He darted down the stairs, and out of the house.

The terrified children hung round their mother; Captain Wareham supported her; Caroline—Matilda rushed in. Concealment was no longer practicable—despair and consternation prevailed through the whole house. The two Miss Parks, who had been "the company in the front drawing-room," discreetly took their departure, but not before they had seen and heard enough to be perfectly *au fait* as to the cause of the confusion, and, in a quarter-of-an-hour, the fact of Mrs. Hamilton's first husband's return was known in every house in the Close, and in half-an-hour more throughout the whole town. But one feeling, however, prevailed—sincere sorrow for the unfortunate Ellen!

Her manners were so gentle, she had not an enemy—her conduct so irreproachable that even the slander of a country-town coterie had never approached her name. Every one felt

disposed to be angry with Mr. Cresford for being alive, and many a parent made use of the event to impress upon the minds of their children the dreadful consequences of a deviation from truth, under any circumstances whatsoever.

Why should we return to the scene where Ellen is helplessly kissing her two elder children, while they are as helplessly hanging around her? The idea of resistance never for a moment crossed her. The strong arm of the law she knew could wrest them from her—there was no hope of touching Cresford's heart. Ellen thought this was the bitterest drop of all, in her cup of woe. To be parted from the beings over whose welfare, bodily and mental, she had so carefully watched; in whom she had with tender, and patient care, sown the seeds of good, which she now saw every day bearing fruit according to her most sanguine wishes! The instinctive bond between mother and child may be equally strong at all ages; but when, in addition to the natural pang at such a tie being severed, there is the sorrowful and disappointing prospect of seeing

your labour of love all wasted, and the grief of seeing your sorrow shared by the innocent sufferers, there can be no anguish more poignant, more hopeless.

In man there may exist a preference towards the children of the woman he loves, over those of the woman he has not loved—not so in the gentler sex. It frequently happens that maternal affection is the more powerful principle in those who have been disappointed in their hopes of conjugal happiness. The heart whose tenderness has been repelled in one quarter, expands and fixes itself in the one other lawful direction, and Ellen's love for her elder children fully equalled that she felt for the child of Algernon.

She has taken her last kiss of them ; she has for the last time wrapped the handkerchiefs close round their throats to defend them from the chill of the evening ; she has for the thousandth time bade them be good children, and implored them to remember all she has told them concerning their duty to God, and to their fellow-creatures. Above all, she made them both promise never to forget to say their

prayers, and added, "never forget to pray for me, my children."

"No, no, mamma; but we shall see you again soon."

"We will hope so, my loves—we shall, I trust, meet again, here, or elsewhere," and her eyes sought that Heaven to which her spirit longed to flee, and be at rest.

"We are not always to remain with that pale dark stranger?"

"He is your father, my children. You owe to him the same duty you owe to me." But she could not bid them love him, obey him, watch his every look, and attend to his every word, as they did to her's, for alas! she remembered but too well what was his violent uncertain temper in happier days, and she trembled to think to what guardianship their helpless innocence was committed.

"If strangers," she added, "should speak slightly of me, darlings,—my own dear, good children, will not believe them. I know they will not."

Once more they were locked in a long and close embrace—gradually she relaxed her hold.

Matilda, Caroline, Captain Wareham gently unwound them from her. The awe-struck children let themselves be quietly withdrawn, and, when Ellen recovered from her swoon, they were with their father some miles on the road to London.

What were Cresford's emotions?—Such was the tumult of his soul they could scarcely be defined. The circumstances under which the children had been introduced to their father were not such as to inspire them with filial affection; and, notwithstanding their mother's parting injunction, they looked upon him with fear and horror, as the stranger who had made mamma so unhappy, and had taken them away from her in such a hurry. They could not the least comprehend what was meant by this man's being their father, for they remembered wearing black frocks for a long, long time, because their father was dead.

Cresford saw the instinctive terror with which, when he kissed them, and bade them love him, they shrank from his caresses. With increased bitterness he exclaimed, "She has taught them to hate me! My own chil-

dren hate me,—my wife disowns me! I am an outcast on the face of the earth! It had been better, a thousand times better for me to have consumed away the remnant of my existence in my dungeon! There I had hope!—I could think of my Ellen,—of my children! and fancy the time might come when I should once more know happiness with them. Oh! for those visionary days of fancied bliss!—how much better than this horrible waking certainty of endless misery! But I will be revenged! If I am miserable, those who have made me so shall not be happy!” And at that moment he took the resolution of availing himself of every power which the law placed in his hands, of bringing her, who had caused him to be the wretch he was, to open and public shame.

The rest of the journey was performed in silence. His heart had been too long seared by suffering, to open to parental affection. His children showed none for him; he was not in a state of mind to attempt to win it by patient kindness, and he felt injured as a father, as well as a husband. In truth, a calmer, gentler disposition than his, might have had all the

milk of human kindness turned to gall, in his situation. He had most truly loved his wife, and his case was as pitiable, and as hopeless a one, as can well be imagined. The mental aberration to which he had slightly alluded, and which had prevented him for some years from even attempting to make his imprisonment in Austria known, either to his friends or to the Government, had been brought on by the vehement and ungoverned nature of his passions; which, as might be expected, did not meet with the soothing treatment calculated to allay them, but, on the contrary, with every thing tending most to inflame and irritate them. The reason which might have controlled them remained, in some degree, weakened, while the passions themselves were in full force.

Upon his arrival in London he deposited his children at an hotel, and sallied forth in search of a lawyer. He walked to Lincoln's Inn, and knocked at the first door that presented itself. He was admitted, and was shown up to a middle-aged, quiet little man, with spectacles upon his nose.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gomez.—And wouldst thou bare thy bosom's grief to one,
A dull mechanic, who but stares on thee
With cold unmeaning wonder ? I had rather
The secret pang should rankle at the core,
And eat my life away, than my dear thoughts
Be made thus stale and common. Hast no friend,
No tried companion, whose unwearied ear
Would ease thy o'ercharged breast ?

Pedro.— Not one—not one !
I am alone, with such a sum of ills
As o'erturns reason.

Manuscript Tragedy.

"SIR," said Cresford to the lawyer, "I come to you for justice. You see before you a man who has been deeply injured in his honour, his affections, and his rights as a man, a husband, and a father."

Mr. M'Leod pointed to a chair, and begged the gentleman to be seated—professed his willingness to lend any assistance in his power to

a person who appeared to be suffering under such injuries, and begged him calmly to detail to him the circumstances of the case, that he might judge in what mode he could best render this assistance.

“ I am calm, sir : if you knew all, you would wonder at my calmness. During the year of peace in 1802, I was called to France on mercantile business. I left a wife I adored—Oh, sir ! she was the loveliest creature that ever walked this earth !—she seemed as pure as she was lovely. I worshipped her as the Persians of old, worshipped the sun. She was every thing to me ! I scarcely suffered the wind to blow on her. The gaze of another man appeared to me almost pollution to a creature so sacred. I left her with her father, as I thought, in honour and in safety, and with her, my two children.

“ Every one knows the fate of those who were found in France upon the declaration of hostilities. I was one of the *détenus*, and at Verdun I was condemned to drag out many, many weary months, in absence from her I so madly adored. A vague jealousy, a fear of

what might occur in my absence, racked my brain almost to madness. I would not accept my parole: the severity of my imprisonment was nothing to me. Of what avail was the liberty of wandering a few miles from the town, to one whose whole soul was in another land? It mattered little to me where I was detained, if I was far from her, and I would be bound by no ties of honour from attempting every thing in my power to make my escape. Several times I had nearly accomplished it, but each time the vigilance of my jailers overtook me.

“ At length I thought of a plan which proved successful. I wrote a letter to my wife, informing her that I intended to counterfeit illness,—on my feigned death-bed, to obtain permission to be buried by torch-light in the Protestant burying-ground outside the town, and with the assistance of my friend and only confidant, Morton, to follow my own funeral procession, at night, wrapt in a military cloak, as one of the mourners. Every thing succeeded to my wishes. I was considered as falling a victim to my mental sufferings, and my fate

excited pity. I obtained the permission required. Morton administered a strong sleeping draught, and as he was my constant attendant, he pronounced me dead. I was placed in my coffin, and on the evening of my funeral, which was the next succeeding my supposed death, he begged to be allowed to weep in private over the bier of his best friend, and took that opportunity of opening the coffin, dressing me in the clothes which he had conveyed into the room, filling the coffin with some billets of wood which had been brought to make up the fire, and of concealing me in an adjoining closet till the moment arrived for the procession to move on. I then mixed among the mourners, and by favour of the darkness, escaped detection. As most of the other officers were on parole, there was no difficulty made as to the number who passed the gates, and with a palpitating heart, I found myself, unfettered by any pledge of honour, beyond the walls of Verdun.

“It was not till all present were occupied in actually lowering the coffin into the ground, that I ventured to absent myself. I took that

moment to steal away, and plunging into a neighbouring thicket, I remained there closely concealed, till they had all wound their way back into the town.

“Morton had placed for me a peasant’s dress, a bag of provisions, and some money, in a hollow tree, the situation of which he had so accurately described to me, that I found it without much loss of time, and having changed my dress, and carefully concealed my military costume, I dashed right onwards, and before morning had cleared three leagues. I need not tell you how I made my way from day to day—how I crossed the Rhine in an open boat, which in my wanderings I found moored to the shore; how I was, in Germany, immediately seized as a spy, and how for four years, I was enabled still to endure the tortures of an Austrian dungeon, by the distant hope of some day being restored to my Ellen,—*my* Ellen! I thought her *mine* then! I have escaped from my dungeon—I have returned! I came to my home—no one knew me—I asked for my wife—I received no answer—I inquired for my children—they were

at Mr. Hamilton's!—for that is his name—that is the name of the man who has robbed me of my wife—my wedded, lawful wife!—for she is my wife! By the law of the land, she is my wife, Sir? There is justice for me in this land of law, of liberty, of impartial justice, is there not? She can be prosecuted for bigamy, sir. She must be found guilty. I come to you to learn how to proceed—Do you advise me, guide me. Oh! my brain is confused and maddened! I cannot, cannot think!”

Cresford paced the apartment in violent agitation. The quiet lawyer looked up from his spectacles, and half wondered whether his would-be client was quite in his right senses. Cresford had not paused for a moment. There was a relief in thus disburthening himself of all that had long been pent up in his soul. He had found those who were nearest and dearest to him, severed, eternally severed from him. All other ties and affections were as nothing before those which had been thus rudely rent asunder, and having once begun to speak to this stranger, he poured forth all his tale as

to his best friend. He might also be prompted to indulge in this confidence by a feeling unknown to himself, that a person totally unacquainted with Ellen, would be more likely to listen with complete sympathy to his wrongs, than any one who had known, or even seen her.

Mr. M'Leod answered,

"Indeed, sir, your case appears to be a very hard one. You wrote, you say, to your wife, to inform her of the plan you meant to adopt?"

"I wrote to her explaining the whole thing, and sent the letter by my friend Maitland, who succeeded in making his escape a month before I put my plan in execution. I waited to make sure he got off in safety. He wrote to me the evening before he sailed in a fishing-vessel for England."

"And you are confident she received this letter?"

"She says she did not—but she had fallen in love with Hamilton! She never loved me, I am now sure she never loved me," he re-

peated in a tone of deep despondency, but he continued with more bitterness : “ It was very convenient to her to believe in my death ; convenient to my partners in trade, to divide the profits of the business — very convenient for her brother to be admitted to a share. Ha, ha, ha ! they have all revelled in my spoils—they thought me safe in my dungeon ! But I am here—I am alive—they cannot prove me dead. I will wrest my wife, my children, my property, from the spoiler’s grasp ! ” and he laughed a wild laugh of desperation.

It had been Mr. M’Leod’s fate frequently to see people under a state of great excitement, so that, although he feared his visiter’s mind might be somewhat warped by his misfortunes, he did not doubt there was ground for all he stated, and he now enquired methodically into his name, his connexions, his residence.

He remembered the name as one of considerable note in the mercantile world, and he had some recollection of having heard his death mentioned, as one of the melancholy con-

sequences of the cruel and unjustifiable act of arbitrary power, which must always be a disgrace on the name of Napoleon.

“ Indeed, Mr. Cresford.” rejoined M’Leod, “ I pity you most sincerely — whether your wife may be to blame or not.”

“ Whether my wife may be to blame or not ? And do I hear an Englishman, whose profession it is, to right the injured, to procure justice for all indifferently — do I hear him advocate the cause of the faithless wife ? then, indeed, have I little chance of redress !”

“ My good sir, you misunderstand me entirely. I do not mean to advocate her cause, or anybody’s cause. I merely mean to say, that I am very sorry for you, whether your wife did ever receive the letter you wrote to her, or whether she did not.”

“ She did receive it — she must have received it ; and, if she did not, she should have waited for some more positive, and certain information of my death, than common report !”

“ Very true, Mr. Cresford—quite true, sir ; yet, if you had been dead, it would not have been easy for you to write her word you were

dead, though she might have expected to hear from you that you were alive."

"Is there justice for me in the laws of my country, or is there not?" repeated Cresford, sternly.

"Certainly, sir. In this country there is justice for everybody."

"Then how am I to seek redress? In what court?"

"Why, if by redress you mean revenge, that is to be obtained by prosecuting your wife for bigamy, in which case the trial would take place at the assizes of the county in which the marriage ceremony was performed: but, under the circumstances of the case under which the crime of bigamy was committed, I conclude, that if she quits the roof of her second husband——"

"He is not her husband, sir; I am her husband, and I will prove it. She, the immaculate — the refined — who seemed to shrink from my love as too impassioned — she shall be proved to have been living in sin with another man!"

"Does she still reside with Mr.—— I beg

your pardon, what was the name you mentioned ?”

“ Hamilton — Hamilton is his name — and curses on it !” exclaimed Cresford, goaded to madness by the cool and methodical manner of the lawyer, who, though a lawyer, was an honest straight-forward man, with plain manners and a good heart.

“ Does she still reside with Mr. Hamilton ?”

“ No ! she is with her father. She had not the face to live on with Hamilton when she knew I was alive, and on my way home.”

“ And your children, sir, does she make any difficulty about sending them to you ?”

“ No ! I brought them away with me yesterday.”

“ Then I do not exactly understand what redress you seek, at the arm of the law.”

The clear head, and the kind heart of the lawyer, made him begin to see that, although a most singular and lamentable case, it was one in which all parties were more deserving of pity, than of blame, and it seemed to him that the poor woman had acted as well as she could under the unfortunate circumstances.

"Have you and Mrs. Cresford had an interview since your return, and in what manner did she comport herself?"

"I saw her yesterday. I saw her in all her loveliness—I could almost have forgotten every thing—for the moment it was such rapture to gaze on her again; when she told me, in so many words, that her whole heart and soul were his—my rival's."

"Poor woman!" ejaculated Mr. M'Leod.

"And is it she, whom you pity? Am I doomed to be scorned and persecuted by the whole human race? To be hated by all who are bound to me by the nearest and dearest ties? Are even strangers to take part against me? But I will have revenge, if I cannot have sympathy. I will be feared, if I cannot be loved. I would fain be loved; it was my nature to love, and to wish for love in return." His voice softened, and the tears swam in his eyes, "But I have never been loved—no, she never did love me! He had her first affections—her whole affections! Oh, how those words ring in my ears!"

Mr. M'Leod was moved by his expressions

of wretchedness, and rising from his seat, he took his hand kindly,

“ Though I am a stranger to you, sir, I pity you most sincerely,” he said, “ and I wish I could persuade you to look more calmly on the case.”

“ Can you—will you assist me ?”

“ Explain to me in what mode you wish for my assistance.”

“ Will you undertake the prosecution of Ellen Cresford for bigamy ?”

“ Why, I must consider a little about it. I am an odd sort of fellow, and though I am a lawyer, I have a corner of conscience,” and Mr. M’Leod smiled. Cresford hated him for being able to smile. “ I do not engage in any thing till I know a little more about the matter. I am very well off in the world, and I do not want to make money, by causing my fellow-creatures to be more unhappy than they need be. I can’t tell what I might do, if I was poor ; but thank God I can afford to dismiss a client, if I think that no good can come of gaining his cause.”

“ Then you dismiss me, Mr. M’Leod ?”

“ I do not justly say that ; but I should like to know how truly your wife believed you were dead and buried, and whether she had got acquainted with the other gentleman, before she heard the news of your death, and a few more such questions ; for it runs in my head, that though your case is a hard one, her’s may be a hard one too, and that the best thing you could both do, would be to let each other alone, and bear your misfortunes as well as you can.”

“ It is easy enough to preach forbearance, and patience, and submission, and resignation. You would not find them quite so easy to practise. I did not come to you, Mr. M’Leod, for ghostly counsel. I came to you for professional advice. Thus much I have ascertained, that the offence will be tried at the county assizes, and the punishment—?”

“ Mercy upon me, sir ! You do not really wish your wife to be transported, when you deceived her with a false report of your death. I will have nothing to say to the matter, Mr. Cresford. You may find another solicitor, who is sharper set for a job than I am.”

Cresford seized his hat, and muttering between his teeth, "Friend and foe, stranger and the wife of my bosom,—all leagued against me!" he made a slight bow to the honest lawyer, and again found himself jostled in the busy throng of London.

One thing, however, he had ascertained, that the prosecution would take place at her native town, and he felt a certain pleasure in the idea that she would be held up to disgrace there, among the very people who knew he was the betrayed and the detested husband. Those who were aware of the humiliating situation in which he was placed, would be witnesses of his revenge.

CHAPTER XIV.

And sudden hurricanes sweep all around,
That strip the tender leaves, and whirl amain,
While dread convulsions heave the shuddering ground,
And rocks, and caves, with hollow moan complain ;
For anger hight, the lord of this domain,
Who when he fondly deems the ruin brought
On others' fame and fortunes, his dear gain,
Finds that his own destruction he hath wrought,
And on himself hath wreaked the vengeance that he sought.

Manuscript Poem.

ONE other mode of vengeance Cresford was determined to pursue, namely, to call out Mr. Hamilton. He returned to the hotel, and there he sat down to write a challenge, couched in language such as he thought must goad any man to give him the satisfaction for which he pined.

Having from the red-book ascertained the

direction to Mr Hamilton's place, he sent it by the post, for there was no one to whom he could apply on this emergency. He had not yet communicated with any of the partners of his house ; he had seen no one except Henry Wareham ; he felt that all living beings were his foes, and he therefore could not bring himself to have recourse to any of those who formerly called themselves his friends. He fancied he should only thereby expose himself to meeting with fresh unkindness, and want of sympathy.

When he had despatched his letter to Hamilton, he sent for his children into the room where he was sitting. They came pale and frightened. He tried to talk to them. He strove to adapt his conversation to their age. He asked them how they liked London, whether they had walked in the streets, and told them they should go to Kensington Gardens ; but his eye was wild, his manner fierce and hurried, and they scarcely ventured to answer him. He soon sent them back to their attendant, his feelings rather embittered than softened by the interview.

When he was able to fix his mind to the consideration of any subject, he became aware that he ought to arrange something more proper and more advantageous for them than their present mode of life, and he resolved, provided he did not fall by the hand of Hamilton, to take a small house in the immediate vicinity of London, where they might reside with their *bonne*, who had been with them for some time, and where they might also have the advantage of masters.

He impatiently awaited Hamilton's answer. It came; and in the first rage of disappointment he tore it into a thousand fragments. Hamilton distinctly and positively refused to meet Mr. Cresford, and told him that no taunts, no insults, should ever induce him to do so.

Cresford threw himself into a chaise, and in half an hour was on the Portsmouth road. When he arrived within sight of Belhanger, he gave a second letter to a messenger, and desired it to be instantly delivered to Mr. Hamilton. In this he branded him with the name of coward, and he flattered himself it

was such as must secure to him the revenge he coveted.

Dismissing his chaise, he approached the scene of Ellen's former happiness, and prowled around the precincts with redoubled feelings of jealousy. The loveliness of the place excited his envy—the venerable-looking manor house, the old oaks, the deer! Yet from these things he gleaned a momentary consolation. Perhaps it was the splendour of the connexion that tempted her! But, oh no! the expression of her countenance, when she said her whole heart, soul, and affections, were Algernon's! Those words sounded again in his ears, and he longed to find himself in mortal struggle, with the man of whom she could so speak.

He hurried back to the inn, hoping his last letter must have provoked an answer consonant to his wishes. He found an envelope, containing his own despatch unopened.

There was no further redress to be sought; and he had but to retrace his steps to London, if possible more infuriated than before.

Algernon had not trusted himself to read this second letter. He had resolved that no earthly power should tempt him to lift his hand against her husband : he was determined to commit no act that would place a barrier between himself and Ellen, which neither time, nor change of circumstances could remove. Cresford was mortal, as well as himself, or Ellen ; and if, although he might wait till extreme old age, there was a possibility of their ever being reunited, no act of his should have rendered their reunion impracticable.

Cresford returned to London, and he quickly put into execution the plan for the establishment of his children. It was necessary to enter into something like an arrangement with his partners. As yet he had taken no measures towards resuming his place among them ; he had made himself known to none of his old acquaintances ; he had communicated with no one, except those we have already mentioned.

But money now became necessary to him. He revisited the house, and begged he might be immediately put in possession of his share

of the receipts. His place of residence became known, and many left their names for him at the hotel ; but even with the few whom he occasionally saw, he preserved a moody silence—to none did he speak of his misfortunes, or of his intentions.

The only person whose house he frequented, was an old bachelor who had been a friend of the family, who was his godfather, and who had taken advantage of that sort of connexion to lecture him, and to find fault with him, when he was a boy. He had always disliked him, and why he should now be the only person whose society he selected, was one of the strange and unaccountable freaks of a mind ill at ease with itself, to which the spectacle of content and cheerfulness is irksome, while it finds a kind of relief in the contemplation of another, equally joyless.

Sir Stephenson Smith had in his youth esteemed himself a man of gallantry. He had never been handsome, but he had thought himself insinuating ; and he had been made a fool of by many a fair one of his day. He

had always professed to be on his guard against the machinations of the sex ; and as he fancied, had preserved his liberty up to the present day ; — that is to say, he had been by turns the tyrant and the slave, of any woman who had art and vice enough to think it worth her while to dupe him. His conversation chiefly turned upon the coldness, and the heartlessness of women. To most others it would have been a shocking sight ; but Cresford found a strange satisfaction in watching the blind and helpless old man, as he sat in his arm-chair, surrounded by all the luxuries, which to him were of no avail, and receiving, with querulous impatience, the attentions of a bustling nurse, who, through evil report and good report, whether he was cross or not, conscientiously did her duty by him, and quietly performed the offices for which she was hired.

Cresford was one day paying Sir Stephenson his diurnal visit. He had sat for some time in silence ; his two hands rested upon his two knees, his eyes looked vacantly, but fixedly,

into the fire, when his meditations were broken in upon by the peevish lamentations of the old man.

“There! that tiresome woman has not given me my snuff-box!” and his feeble, palsied hands, strayed over the table in search of the snuff-box which was in his pocket. “She has no feeling for me! she does not care whether I am comfortable or uncomfortable, as long as she gets her money and her perquisites—that is the way of women! Talk of their kindliness! They care for nothing but themselves. They can pretend to care for one, when one is young and handsome—and when one has plenty of money in one’s pocket too; but I never knew one of them who had a grain of feeling! I have been a pretty fellow in my youth, and have had as many women make love to me as my neighbours, but hang me, if any one of them ever loved me for myself. There is this Sarah Purbeck, she cares no more for me!—”

“What an infatuation it is,” exclaimed Cresford, “which can make us worship such

fickle, heartless creatures ! as variable as the weathercock, which changes with every wind that blows ! But that time is past—I have awoke from my day-dream—I know what their love is worth now !”

“ Ay ! and so do I, my boy. I never thought it worth much ; and now I know it, is worth—nothing at all ! However, if I have not given them much of a heart-ache,” he added, laughing a feeble, old, cracked laugh, “ they have not given me much of a heart-ache either !”

“ Do you think they are capable of loving truly and sincerely ? Do you think they can love, though you and I may have lived unloved ?”

“ Yes ; they can love themselves, and their clothes, and their opera-boxes, and, sometimes, some man they ought not to love.”

Cresford bit his lips, and knit his brows, and his fist clenched upon the table. A long silence ensued. At length the old man fidgeted about, rang the bell, and asked for his chocolate. He struck his watch : it was

five minutes past the hour. He scolded Mrs. Purbeck for her inattention, and when she left the room, he said in a dejected tone—

“It is a sad thing to have nobody to care for one: that woman does not love me. Perhaps, after all, if I had married, I might, in a wife, have found an affectionate nurse.”

“Affection!” exclaimed Cresford — “affection in a wife! Have not I a wife?—and have I met with affection?” He several times paced up and down the apartment, and then hastily took his leave.

These visits did not tend to put him in good humour with human nature, or with womankind: they still more soured and embittered his temper; and when he had put his affairs in train, had resumed his situation as partner, and measures had been taken for Henry Wareham’s withdrawal from a concern in which he found himself frequently and painfully brought in contact with Cresford, he left London, his mind fully made up to pursue his unfortunate wife according to the rigour of the law.

He had ascertained from Mr. M'Leod that the trial would take place at the assizes of the county in which the second marriage had been celebrated, the very one in which she at present resided. He took up his abode in a neighbouring village. His first care was to obtain the certificate of his own marriage at the cathedral church of —. He proceeded to procure that of the second marriage at Longbury, for which purpose he sent to the minister of that place, a regular application for the extract from the parish register.

Mr. Allenham had no option — he was obliged to comply; but he was inexpressibly alarmed at the application, and lost no time in informing Captain Wareham of the circumstance, while Caroline wearied herself in conjectures, and hopes, and fears as to what Cresford might meditate.

This communication did not render Captain Wareham more easy and comfortable in his mind; and although the kindness of his heart prompted him to conceal his fears from Ellen, the additional weight of care

rendered him more than usually difficult to be pleased. The Allenhams had returned to their own home soon after Ellen's arrival, and her two poor elder children having been removed, the last few weeks had been passed in melancholy quiet. Still Matilda found her task more than usually difficult, and she was so subdued herself by the misfortunes of her sister, that she had no longer the buoyancy of spirit which enabled her, half gaily, half resolutely, to bear up against the daily worries of her father's temper. To Ellen he never, on any occasion, spoke with captiousness ; but he often appeared annoyed with the little Agnes, who was old enough to toddle about the room, to pull away grandpapa's toast, to stumble over his foot as it was extended towards the fire, to frighten him lest she might fall against the fender, and to do the hundred things which are charming and attractive to those whose hearts are light, and who can give themselves up to watching the graceful awkwardnesses, the winning *espiégleries* of infancy, but which

are inexpressibly wearisome when the mind is oppressed with deep and serious care.

Ellen saw that her child, her only remaining child, was often troublesome to her father, and she kept it out of the room as much as possible. He was then vexed that the child should not be with them, and his good-nature made him fear he might have hurt Ellen's feelings.

Cresford having obtained the two certificates, now waited upon Mr. Turnbull, a country gentleman and a magistrate, and producing the two documents, informed him that he wished to indict his wife, Ellen Cresford, for bigamy, and required him to issue a warrant for her apprehension.

Mr. Turnbull, although not personally acquainted with the parties, knew the respectability of their situations, and had heard under what circumstances the second marriage had been contracted. He attempted to dissuade Mr. Cresford from carrying matters to such an extremity; to which Cresford sternly replied, as he had previously done to Mr. M'Leod's

remonstrances, that he did not apply to him for advice, that he simply waited upon him to demand the performance of his duty as a magistrate—that the case was clearly made out before him, and he was not to counsel, but to act.

Mr. Turnbull, although he did so most unwillingly, had no choice but to grant the desired warrant. It was with a feeling of triumph that Cresford seized the paper, and, bowing to Mr. Turnbull, abruptly quitted him, before he had time to adduce any arguments in favour of delay.

Cresford proceeded to the county town, and delivering the warrant to the constable, desired him to perform his duty.

It so happened, that the constable to whom he addressed himself, was the very Will Pollard who had once lived as gardener with Captain Wareham, and who had known Ellen from her childhood. He had inherited a little money, and had set up for himself, as Nurseryman and Seedsman. He stood aghast when the paper was placed in his hand, and declared in round terms, that nothing should induce

him to be the bearer of such a thing, "to Miss Ellen that was."

"Take back your paper, sir! If you are for taking the law of her, sir, you must find somebody else—I'll have nothing to say to it," and he shoved the paper back to Cresford in no very civil manner.

"You cannot help yourself," Cresford replied with an exulting calmness. "You must execute a magistrate's warrant—you cannot help yourself."

"I a'n't bound to do such a thing as this?" asked Pollard the gardener, of Simpson the shoemaker, who happened to be present.

"I don't know what right you have to refuse," answered Simpson, who was a man of wisdom, and read all the newspapers.

Pollard hesitated. He had not long been established in a concern of his own, he was new in office, and he looked up to Simpson for advice and guidance: after having scratched his head, brushed his hat with his sleeve, and pruned a thriving young shrub considerably more than it required, he said,

"Maybe if 'tis to be done, I may be able

to speak kinder to her than another, and she always was partial to me from a child." So he took the paper and held it doubtingly and distrustfully in his hand. "No," he said, again scratching his head, "I don't half like the job; you had better get Mr. Clarke the carpenter, on the left-hand side, to do it for you, sir. He is a constable as well as me."

"Mr. Pollard, the law must have its course. You know that, as well as I do. You had better take the warrant I have now given you, and bring the person therein mentioned, before the magistrate, as the law directs."

"Well," said Pollard, "what must be, must be, and it don't signify argufying. And when is it to be served?"

"To-day, sir! Now!" answered Cresford in a stentorian voice. "I expect to meet you at Mr. Turnbull's with — with — the person specified in that warrant, in your custody. In three hours I shall be there."

Cresford departed, leaving poor Pollard perplexed and confounded. It went against him sadly, to do what was required of him. He turned in his head how he might open the bu-

siness to Miss Ellen "just easy like, without putting her in a fluster," and in the first place he resolved to change his dress. "He wasn't no ways tidy to appear before Captain Wareham and his family. He would look clean and decent at least. He would do nothing as was not respectful by the family." So Pollard retired to repair his toilette, feeling that he thereby softened the blow which was hanging over poor Ellen.

His wife was surprised to see him all in his Sunday's best.

"Why, what merry-making are you ever going to, Will?" said she: "is it your club day?"

"No, 'tan't my club day, woman; you know well enough, that a'n't till next week?"

"Why, in the name of fortune, where are you going to, then? You are not going to Tharford fair, sure!"

"No! I a'n't going to no fair, nor no merry-making," and he stood brushing his hat round and round with the sleeve of his coat; "I am going where I have no mind to go."

"Why, Will, you quite fright me! You can't have done any thing wrong?"

"No! But I've got a warrant to sarve."

"Why, Lord bless us, this is not the first warrant you have had to sarve! But I never knew you dress yourself out so fine to sarve a warrant before," and Peggy smiled.

"You would not laugh, if you knew who that warrant was made out for—It's for my Miss Ellen as you have heard me talk of, many and many's the time. She's the one as I've often told you, was as quick up the ladder as I was myself—and such a one as she was to sow seeds! and she could make cuttings almost as well as I could myself! Miss Caroline, she was always for walking in the streets, and looking out for the beaux, but Miss Ellen, she would hoe and rake for me all her play-time, if they would let her."

"A warrant for her, Will? You are dreaming."

"No, I a'n't! But hold your tongue, and mind your business. There's no good in prating—we must all do what is appointed us."

Will marched out at the door with a tear

called up by his own eloquence gathering in his eye.

He proceeded to Captain Wareham's. He knocked at the door.—

“If you please, James,” said he, “if you please, I want to have a word with Mrs. Hamilton—that is—Mrs. Cres—Miss Ellen that was—my Miss Ellen.”

“Step in, Master Pollard, I'll tell her directly.”

Pollard stood twirling his hat, and debating within himself how he was to open his business, when James came back, and bade him walk up.

“Mrs. Cresford is alone—she bids us all say Mrs. Cresford now,” he whispered; “she says there's no use in standing out about a name,—and yet she takes her letters every morning as if she did not half like to touch them.”

Pollard entered the room where Ellen sat, meek and dejected, with little Agnes in her lap playing at the table—she looked up with a faint smile.

“I have not seen you a long time, Pollard ;

I hear you are become a married man since you left my father."

"Yes, ma'am, so I am, an't please you."

"I hope you are quite comfortable; I should have been to call on you, but I have not been out lately."

"Thank you, ma'am, all the same for thinking of me. 'Twould be a pride and a pleasure to me, to show you how nice and comfortable I've got every thing about me—but—

"Speak out, Pollard; you are a very old friend: you were a great play-mate of mine in my childhood. If you have any little favour to ask of me, I shall be glad to do my best, though I am not quite so rich now as I once was." Her eyes dropped, and a paler hue stole over her cheek.

"No, 't isn't that, bless your kind heart, 't isn't that. I had rather by half ask a favour of you, for I know 'twould be a pleasure to you to grant it. But I've got a bit of paper here, ma'am. You see, ma'am, I'm a constable, and they have put this upon me. They say as I must give you this here bit of paper, and I scarce know what will come of it."

Ellen received the paper from Pollard's trembling hand, while with the back of the other he brushed off a tear. She still thought some misfortune had befallen his family;—that most likely it was a petition, and it took her some moments to collect her thoughts so as to comprehend the full purport of the warrant.

The idea that she could be prosecuted for bigamy had never before crossed her imagination. The misfortune of no longer being the wife of Algernon, and the disgrace and shame of having lived with him for two years, had completely occupied her whole soul. She had not been able to imagine any misery beyond this. No one had ever hinted at such a possibility, nor indeed had any one believed that Cresford, however keenly he might himself suffer from the consequences of his own imprudence, would have wreaked his useless vengeance upon his unfortunate wife.

Ellen was thunder-struck ! The poor constable begged her pardon, entreated her to believe it was no fault of his ; that he was bound to obey the law. “ We can't help ourselves, ma'am ; we must do what the law di-

rects,—them as have to execute the laws, and them as have to obey them,—’tis all one for us both.”

Poor Ellen begged him to find her father, and to bid him come to her. She was scared, frightened. She could not be more completely separated from Algernon,—her children were already torn from her. She was, therefore, simply, vaguely frightened.

Captain Wareham came. She gave him the paper. He guessed the purport but too well, and turned deadly pale: “When is this summons to be attended, Pollard?”

“Why, sir, Mr. Cresford said we must meet him at, Squire Turnbull’s in three hours from the time he was at my house, and that was at two o’clock, just as I had done dinner.”

“Meet him! Am I to meet Mr. Cresford? Oh, father! any thing but that!”

“Dearest child, there is no avoiding it. You must exert all your strength of mind: you must not give way. Mr. Turnbull is a good sort of man, and there will be no one else present. Cresford is a brute, an unmanly brute! If you could feel half as angry with

him as I do, your anger would give you strength to go through the interview."

"I am too miserable to feel angry, father. Besides, I am sorry for him:—I have made him very unhappy. I know what pain it is to be separated from what one loves, even when one knows one is loved in return. What am I to do, father?" she meekly added.

"The sooner we get this unpleasant business over, the better, my dearest child. Go and put on your things; I will order a chaise immediately." He hurried Ellen out of the room; he longed to be for a moment freed from her presence; he knew that this summons was the prelude to a prosecution; he knew that the punishment of bigamy might be transportation. Though he had no idea matters would ever be brought to such an extremity, he felt awed and nervous in the extreme, and he paced the apartment in the greatest agitation. Pollard stood still, perplexed and grieved. "Get along, Pollard," exclaimed Captain Wareham, angrily; "can't you wait down-stairs? Why do you stand here watching me?" He rang the bell vio-

lently, and ordered the hack chaise to be instantly procured.

Captain Wareham kept no carriage. Ellen had strictly conformed to her father's mode of life: she would not consent to live in splendour upon the money Mr. Hamilton would fain have forced upon her.

The hack chaise came to the door. The lovely, the graceful Ellen, who, as the wife of Mr. Cresford, had been used to all the luxuries of life, and, as the wife of Algernon Hamilton, to all its refinements, ascended the jingling steps, and, rustling through the straw, seated herself at the farther corner of the narrow seat, while the constable of the parish, mounted on the bar before, conveyed her like a common culprit before the magistrate.

CHAPTER XV.

Cosmus, Duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable. "You shall read," saith he, "that we are commanded to forgive our enemies, but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends." But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune: "Shall we," saith he, "take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?" and so of friends in proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge, keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well.

LORD BACON.

Redeemer, heal his heart! It is the grief
Which festers there that hath bewildered him.

SOUTHEY'S RODERICK.

THE events of the morning had been so sudden and so bewildering, that Ellen scarcely comprehended what was happening. The knowledge that she was again to be brought into the presence of Cresford, was the one idea that possessed her mind. "What does he want me for? What am I to say to him, father? What is this to lead to?"

"I scarcely know, my child. You have nothing to do but to answer the truth. Your conduct has been irreproachable. You have nothing to blush for."

"Oh, how I dread meeting those eyes again! Keep close to me, father."

They arrived. Ellen, pale and trembling, was supported by her father into the hall. They were instantly shown into Mr. Turnbull's study, where he waited to receive them. He offered Ellen a seat. There was a dignity in her timidity that awed, while it excited compassion; and Mr. Turnbull, though a plain matter-of-fact man, treated her with more polite deference than usually appeared in his manner towards women.

"I believe," he said, "I must now summon Mr. Cresford, that he may go through the form of his deposition."

Ellen bowed assent, and trembled through every limb. But she kept her eyes on the ground, and moved not. Cresford entered,—she did not stir.

As he approached the table, he gazed on her, though it was rather in triumph than in

love; but her veil was down, her bonnet tied close, her form enveloped in a cloak. The oath was administered. Mr. Turnbull said:

“I believe, Madam, you must for a moment remove your veil, that the complainant may identify you.”

Ellen drew it aside, and turned on him her pale, sad face; but still she raised not her eyes. Cresford advanced a step towards the table, to take the Bible, and to swear that the prisoner was Ellen Cresford, his wife. She instinctively seized her father's arm, and sheltered herself behind him.

Cresford showed his marriage certificate. The servant who had formerly lived with him, and the clerk of * * * *, were present to prove the celebration of the marriage. He then produced the extract from the Longbury register.

Mr. Turnbull asked Ellen what she had to say in reply. In a faint voice, she answered “Nothing!” She had but one absorbing feeling—that of bringing this painful interview to a close. But Captain Wareham interposed.

“I cannot allow this cruel and unjust state-

ment to be made, without simply mentioning the circumstances under which my daughter's second marriage was contracted. Mr. Cresford chose to publish an account of his own death—he chose to enact his own funeral—his friends and relations mourned him as dead. Two years and two months after the receipt of the paper containing this account of his decease, my daughter contracted a second marriage. Should any man in justice, in honour, prosecute such a case?"

"Certainly not," was Mr. Turnbull's concise reply. He looked at Cresford: "Do you wish me, sir, to proceed?—it is yet time to pause. You will no longer be at liberty to retract. If I make out the commitment, you are bound over to prosecute."

"I know it, sir! It is my intention so to do."

"Madam, my duty is a painful one, but I must proceed according to the provisions of the Act!" and Mr. Turnbull drew out the warrant of commitment; at the same time he informed the constable that he would himself attend that evening, with a brother magis-

trate, to admit her to bail; and that he authorized him to conduct her back to her own house, there to await his arrival, rather than at the county gaol."

"Father, father! I am not to be taken to prison! Impossible! He cannot mean to bring such disgrace upon the mother of his children?"

"My dear Madam, I will attend you at your own house: as the presence of two magistrates is necessary, I will bring Sir John Staples with me. Captain Wareham can then give us bail for your appearance at the ensuing assizes."

"The assizes! Oh! he cannot be in earnest! This is too, too cruel! Drag me before the eyes of the whole county! blazon our misery, and our shame to the world! bring upon us the mockery of the coarse and the unfeeling mob! Oh, Charles! what have I done to deserve this?" She burst into an agony of tears.

"What have you done? Have you not blasted my happiness, broken my heart, and maddened my brain?—and she asks what she

has done !” he added, turning round to those present, with a wild and fearful laugh.

Mr. Turnbull hastened to bring the scene to a close, and lost no time in leading poor Ellen back to her hack chaise. He almost turned Cresford from the door, and instantly galloped off himself in search of Sir John Staples, to proceed with him to Captain Wareham’s house, and there to admit Ellen to bail, that, at least, she might thus be spared one painful and ignominious part of what she was doomed to endure.

Ellen threw herself, sobbing and weeping, into the corner of the carriage.

“ So I am to be tried, father—tried for bigamy, I suppose ! Oh ! have mercy Heaven ! tried like a common malefactor ! placed at the bar, with all the lawyers to look at me ; and the dirty mob to laugh, and bandy jests upon me ! Oh ! I never, never thought of this ! And must it be ? Is there no escape ?”

“ Alas ! alas ! my poor Ellen, I know of none. There is no chance of bringing Cresford to reason ; every attempt to do so seems but to incense him. I really think his intel-

lects are affected,—he is scarcely in his right senses.”

“ I have done that !” she said, in a dejected tone. “ It is not for me to be too hard upon him.” After a pause of some length, she added, “ And, father—the punishment ?”

“ Oh, my child ! do not think of that ! no jury on earth can find you guilty.”

“ But I am guilty, father !—it is true I have committed the crime ! I am guilty of bigamy—though it is not my fault.”

“ They will not condemn you.”

“ But if they should ? I should like to know the worst.”

“ Why, under aggravated circumstances, the punishment may be transportation for seven years, but they will never pass such a sentence, so think no more of that.”

“ I had rather it had been death,” she replied, in a quiet tone of despair. After another pause she asked, “ If I were to be transported, would that annul my marriage ? Should I be free ?”

“ No, my love, even that would not annul your marriage.”

"Perhaps it is best so. I am glad it would not: I would not mar his glorious and honourable career in his own country. It is enough to have the ruin of one fellow-creature on one's conscience." She spoke no more.

They arrived at home. In less than an hour Mr. Turnbull and Sir John Staples arrived, and with them Lord Besville, whom Mr. Turnbull also called upon, and who became bail, with Captain Wareham, for her appearance at the assizes.

The constable was dismissed; poor Will Pollard! Never had the law of the land a more unwilling assistant in its execution. When he returned to his cottage late in the evening, he threw down his hat on the table.

"Well," he muttered to himself, "this has been the worst day's job that ever I had to do. I would not have such another, no—not to be justice of the peace, and a squire to boot. Why," he exclaimed in a louder voice, and striking his fist on the table, "why, that fellow had no more business to come back alive, after having sent word he was dead, than

I have to bring in my bills twice over ! Shame upon him !”

It was some time before Peggy got at the rights of the case.

“ So, ’tis her second husband as is her true love. Poor soul ! Well, ’tis very hard. Why ’tis almost worse than if it was her husband’s ghost come to haunt her—not that I should any ways like to see the ghost of my first lover Tom Hartrop, as was drowned off Ushant.”

Peggy had been a beauty, and was rather fond of talking of her first, her second, her third, and her tenth lover. Will Pollard was in no mood to listen, and, with a manner unusually surly, bade her, “ hold her jaw, and make haste with his supper.”

It was a sorrowful evening at Captain Wareham’s. Ellen retired early to rest, or rather to weep. Captain Wareham sat up late perambulating the small drawing-room, while the measured creaking of his shoes, and periodical stamp of his foot, were heard by Ellen in her apartment above, and by Matilda in hers, as they each passed the greater part of the night in painful watching.

Ellen sat down to write to Algernon for the first time since she had quitted his roof, and resumed the name of Cresford. To him she now looked for succour. The cruelty of Cresford seemed to have widened the breach between them, and to draw her irresistibly towards one whose conduct throughout had been dictated by the very spirit of honour, generosity, and tenderness.

She detailed to him all which had that day taken place. She told him she was to be tried, publicly tried; that she must, in vindication of her own fame, produce every proof that they had received the most authentic accounts of Cresford's death. She begged him to take every means towards finding a copy of the newspaper containing the official return of the deaths at Verdun. She begged him to enquire for Colonel Eversham, and, if possible, to discover what had been the fate of young Maitland, to whom Cresford had entrusted the letter which was to apprise her of his plan.

"I write to you, Algernon," she continued, "because I know you will leave nothing unattempted to serve me, and to rescue me from

the only one additional misery which can now be heaped upon me—that of being supposed to have sinned knowingly. Perhaps I may always have been too much alive to the opinion of the world. Perhaps one ought to be satisfied with knowing one's intentions to have been innocent, and it may be nobler to despise the idle gossip of those one neither loves nor esteems; but my error, if it is one, is the safest for woman, and you, who know that I would neither see you, nor correspond with you, till I fancied the two years of my widowhood expired, can alone guess what I feel at thus having my miserable history dragged before the public. I have been stunned, annihilated by the blow. The idea of such a consummation to my earthly woes never crossed my mind before. But now my one only hope is at least to prove I sincerely believed myself free when I gave myself to you, that I did not wittingly involve you in the misery which attends all in any way connected with me.

“ You must secure for me the best lawyer. In short, I trust every thing to you. This will be expensive; it has not been pride, but

my deference for that world before whom I am doomed to be degraded, which has hitherto prevented my allowing you to contribute to my support. I know full well that all you have, might be mine; I know from my own what your feelings are, and for this cause, for the cause of my honour, I am ready to let you incur whatever expense may be necessary. I write to you at once that not a moment may be lost. The assizes are to be held the 20th of next month. If possible, discover the fate of Maitland—Adieu! I write no more—but you may communicate with my father. May Heaven preserve you to be a blessing to all who are allowed the happiness of belonging to you!

“ Our child—oh, there is still one link which binds us together! Our child is well, and lovely.

ELLEN.”

Algernon, upon the receipt of this letter, was nearly frantic with rage and indignation. If Cresford longed to find himself, hand to hand, engaged with his rival, not less did Algernon

burn to meet him in mortal strife; but still Cresford would have been safe with him in a desert, so closely did he cling to some distant hope of reunion with Ellen.

Though he was wild with indignation at Cresford's unmanly and cruel revenge, there was a sense of relief to him in having a definite object to pursue. He had hitherto remained in utter seclusion and inactivity. He feared to injure, or to distress her, by any measure he could take, and he had lived the life of an anchorite, wandering among his own woods, far from public business, useless alike to himself and to others. At length he was roused to exertion, and horrified as he was at the image of his lovely, refined, delicate, shrinking Ellen being exposed to the gaze of a public court, there was a comfort in being actively employed in her behoof. He threw himself into his carriage to fly to London, and there to begin the necessary inquiries.

He first drove to the house of the most eminent lawyer of the day, to secure him as counsel. Cresford had been there before him. He had retained him; and although he was so

engaged that he did not attend this circuit, he was effectually prevented from affording Algernon any assistance. He proceeded to another, whose name stood high as a man of overpowering eloquence, when he had justice on his side, although not perhaps equally skilled in making the worse, appear the better cause. He found him free, and he was instantly retained.

He next repaired to the newspaper offices, and there having stated the date and the title of the paper of which he was in want, they gave him every hope of soon procuring it.

And now to find Colonel Eversham ! He looked in the army-list. He found the name. He proceeded to the Horse Guards. He there learned that Colonel Eversham was with his regiment in Spain, having joined the army under the command of Sir John Moore. He instantly applied to the adjutant-general. He wrote to the military secretary of the commander-in-chief. He explained the case, and implored that leave of absence might be despatched to Colonel Eversham to quit his regi-

ment, and if possible to return to England before the 20th of the ensuing month.

The most difficult point remained. Maitland! He had no clue whereby to discover who, or what Maitland was. The army-lists and navy-lists, for the years 1801, 1802, 1803, were turned over and over again. No one appeared whom he could make out to have been a *détenu*.

At length he thought of applying to the Court Guide, and of personally calling at every house in London inhabited by any one of the name of Maitland. He might by chance discover whether any relative had been a *détenu*, and thus ascertain his fate.

CHAPTER XVI.

For peace is with the dead, and piety
Bringeth a patient hope to those who mourn
O'er the departed.

SOUTHEY'S RODERICK.

WITH the guide-book in his hand, Algernon proceeded in his search. It was the time of year when London was very empty, and at many houses he found the family were out of town. On such occasions he ascertained the address of the master of the house, resolving to write his inquiries should other means fail. At one large mercantile house in the city, he found a portly old man, who said a brother of his, had a natural son, who had been abroad some years ago, and was now in India, he believed ; but " he had been a wild chap, and he

did not rightly know what had become of him." This sounded as if he might be the person in question ; but if so, the prospect was most unsatisfactory. Still Algernon was not disheartened. The next house at which he continued his inquiries was that of a widowed lady, in Upper Quebec-street. He knocked at the door. He asked for Mrs. Maitland. He was shown up-stairs into a small, two-windowed drawing-room, very tidy, very clean, and very formal. Not a chair was out of its place ; the sofa was against the wall. At one side of the table, with her knitting, sate an oldish lady, very neatly dressed, and with a sweet but melancholy expression of countenance. On the other sate a younger person, evidently her daughter ; but pale and faded, and decidedly past the bloom of youth. She was engaged in needlework.

They both rose on the entrance of the stranger, and the elder lady begged him to be seated, with a gentle formality, while she and her daughter resumed their seats, and mildly awaited what he had to say. Their calmness and their politeness made him experience a sen-

sation more akin to awkwardness, than was usual to a person so accustomed to the world, and so gifted with a prepossessing manner. Moreover, a sort of intuitive conviction came over him, that he spoke to a widow who had lost her son, whether or no, she might be the parent of him of whom he was in search.

It was with a certain degree of hesitation that he opened his story, and explained, that for reasons which were of the most vital importance to himself and others in whom he was deeply interested, he was anxious to know what had become of a young Mr. Maitland, who had been a *détenu* at Verdun, and had effected his escape thence in the beginning of the year 1804. He saw the daughter look anxiously at the mother, and drop her work. He saw the mother's hands shake as she knitted two or three more stitches before she spoke.

His kind heart grieved for the pain he had evidently given, but yet he felt a throb of pleasure as he hoped he had succeeded in discovering the object of his search. Mrs. Maitland laid down her knitting, and taking off her spectacles, replied in a calm voice,—

"My only son was a *détenu*, sir, and he never returned to me. He was lost in an open boat, off the coast between Antwerp and Bruges."

The mother slightly clasped her two hands, as they fell quietly on her knee, in the attitude of a person who is meek, and resigned, and accustomed to her sorrow.

He turned to the daughter.

"It gives me infinite pain, madam, to continue to ask questions upon a subject which must be so trying to your mother's feelings, but if you knew how much the peace and respectability of the person on earth most dear to me is implicated in the replies to my questions, you would pardon me for persisting."

He then briefly stated his, and Ellen's story, to Mrs. and Miss Maitland. They listened with kindness and attention, and told him in return, that young Maitland had been travelling in France for pleasure, and to see the world; that in a year he would have been of age, when he would have come into a large property which was strictly entailed upon him. That he would then have placed his mother and

sister in a situation of comfort and affluence. But the war broke out. He became a *détenu*. She said that he had often mentioned Mr. Cresford's name in his letters, and had alluded to the impatience with which he bore his imprisonment. That they had never heard from him, from the time of his making his escape, but that from all they could learn, he had reached Bruges in safety. That he had there waited for some time in hopes of being able to row to some English vessels which were cruising off the coast. That at length he and some companions had one night made a desperate attempt to do so. But the weather was too tempestuous for the small fishing-boat which they had succeeded in unmooring from the shore, especially as it was manned by young men who were not accustomed to the perils of the sea. That only two, out of the five, had survived, having been picked up by the English vessels when the daylight dawned.

The young man having thus perished before he came of age, the mother and sister had continued to live in poverty and seclusion. Care had long since impaired the bloom of his sister,

who it seems was some years older than the youth, who had been the hope, the joy, the darling of them both.

The parties had become mutually interested for each other, and Hamilton easily obtained from them a promise of committing to paper their statement of young Maitland's death, and allowing it to be produced upon the trial. If possible, he would spare them the unpleasantness of being subpoenaed to appear in person.

They parted in kindness, and Algernon returned home, anxiously expecting his answer from the Horse Guards. He was informed that Colonel Eversham's leave would be granted; that he should be allowed to return to attend at the assizes, and wind and weather permitting, there was every prospect he would arrive in time. He despatched a letter to Colonel Eversham to inform him of the purpose for which his presence was so necessary, and entreated him to use all diligence in reaching England.

In the course of time, the newspaper was found which contained the account of Cres-

ford's death, and Algernon felt some satisfaction in reflecting that every thing was now in a fair way to clear his Ellen from any suspicion, or shade of blame. He obeyed her injunctions by communicating only with Captain Wareham. His whole soul was bent as devotedly as her's could be, to the object of making her innocence shine forth untarnished.

The report of the trial which was to take place soon became public, and excited the greatest sensation, and interest, in the whole neighbourhood. Every one felt for Ellen, and all were anxious to prove their pity, and their personal respect for her. Captain Wareham's humble door was literally besieged with carriages and inquirers. Every one of any note in the vicinity, left their names, as a sort of homage to her character.

Lord Besville, who had so kindly come forward at the first moment, offered his carriage to conduct her to the court, when the awful day arrived, and his offer was accepted with thankfulness.

These tokens of approbation, and the support of all around, were some consolation to

poor Ellen. She hated notoriety ; she had rather have retired into obscurity, and, hoping that her fate was unnoticed and undiscussed, have hid her head in peace and humility : but, if she must be brought before the world, these testimonies of the esteem of her friends and neighbours, in some measure soothed her feelings. People are seldom so wretched, that the proofs of sympathy in their fellow-creatures are not agreeable to them. The list of the inquirers is read with interest and gratification, by the sick, and by the mourner. No feeling more bitter than that your sufferings, whether mental or bodily, are uncared for.

Ellen had written her wishes to Algernon. She knew that every measure which human zeal and foresight could pursue to clear her fame, would be adopted : upon that subject, therefore, she rested in security, and she passed her time schooling her mind to bear the worst, and seeking strength and assistance from the one only unfailing source of consolation, under misfortunes such as hers.

She believed her father, when he told her it was next to impossible that, supposing

the sentence of transportation should pass, it would be carried into execution; and yet she thought it would be wiser to accustom her mind in some degree to such a possibility, than to allow herself to be so completely taken by surprise as she had been, when first the idea of undergoing a trial had opened upon her. Visions of the hulks, of foreign lands, of being associated with horrible criminals, a thousand half-defined, ill-understood horrors would visit her. In her dreams she fancied herself torn from her remaining child, a stranger, and an outcast, at Botany Bay, and though, when she woke, and shook off the images conjured up by sleep, she assured herself that such a result was most improbable, she could not be certain that such was impossible. She knew not what farther evidence Cresford might adduce of his having duly warned her of his intentions: her proofs were all negative; and sometimes the anticipations of what might be her future fate, were so appalling, that her ardent desire to exercise the virtue of resignation, and her fear of increasing the misery of others, were

not strong enough to save her from paroxysms of terror, and despondency.

Mrs. Allenham had, upon the first intelligence of what was to take place, hastened to her sister. Captain Wareham was so full of care, and so unhappy, that he rejoiced in the presence of some one who should spare him the task of giving hopes, which, from the despondency of his own nature, he was far from feeling. Ellen would weep by the hour together, with the sympathizing Caroline, who, as usual, was all kindness and gentleness. Matilda, who was younger, and scarcely able to enter into the full and complicated miseries of the case, attempted to inspire Ellen with a proud feeling of disdain for her unjust accusations, and a confident expectation of an honourable acquittal. The three sisters were one day sitting together, and Ellen was bidding Caroline watch tenderly over her little Agnes if their worst anticipations should be fulfilled, when Caroline could not help saying—

“ But, Ellen, if you really believe there is a chance of anything so dreadful, I almost

think, if I were you, I would fly the country with Mr. Hamilton, and your child. You were married to him too, after all."

"Caroline, I resisted Algernon when he pleaded. If Algernon's voice, if Algernon's beseeching countenance, if Algernon's eyes, failed to persuade me, fear will not! No; my fair fame shall be tarnished by no wilful act of my own."

"That is right, Ellen!" exclaimed Matilda; "I would die sooner! Respected as you are by everybody now, I would die sooner than be looked down upon!"

"Well, you are quite right; it was very wrong of me to have thought of such a thing. And I, a clergyman's wife too! But, I am afraid, if Mr. Allenham was to try and persuade me, I should not be so firm as you are."

"But he is your husband, Caroline."

"Yes, quite true; and then if he said it, it must be right, whatever it might be."

Time stole away. Hamilton watched with anxious eyes the vane of the neighbouring church, the smoke of each chimney of the

houses opposite. He had arranged every thing with Ellen's counsel, and a fortnight before the day fixed for the trial he went to Falmouth, there to look out for the arrival of every packet, every transport, every fishing-vessel, that he might be sure not to miss Colonel Eversham.

The wind had been favourable for conveying the despatches which contained Colonel Eversham's leave-of absence, but it continued in the East, long after Algernon had wished it to veer round. Steam-vessels were not then in use, and every thing depended on the elements.

The morning of the 18th arrived. Colonel Eversham had not yet appeared—Algernon was in despair—but leaving his servant to watch for him, he could no longer remain absent from the spot where his beloved Ellen's fate was to be decided, and he hastened to —. On the evening of the 19th he had an interview with Captain Wareham, and was obliged to tell him that Eversham had not yet landed, but that he had Mrs. Maitland's account of her son's death, and that their counsel was confident of

success. Mrs. Maitland was in the town, that in case her statement was not considered sufficient, she, if necessary, might be called into court.

Hamilton was so painfully interested, and so occupied with business, that it was not till the busy streets were quiet, the tumult of the well-filled hotel hushed, and midnight approaching, that he had time to reflect how short a space divided him from Ellen and from his child.

How his heart yearned towards them! how he longed to be allowed to see them! but he determined to do nothing, till the eventful morrow was passed. His counsel should be able to aver, with truth, that they had never met from the time they heard that Cresford was living. He would not even indulge himself by walking before the house, and looking at the exterior of the dwelling which contained his soul's treasures, lest any one might recognize him, and might fancy he had visited her clandestinely. He passed the night, however, in restless sleeplessness. He sat at the window of his bed-room, and having thrown open

the sash, he gazed out upon the clear, deep blue, quiet heavens : the busy hum of men had subsided ; the streets were deserted ; the lights one by one had been extinguished ; not a sound was to be heard but the monotonous call of the watchman, pacing his rounds. A gentle breeze just whispered through the poplar trees of a neighbouring garden, and brought with it the refreshing smell which the dews of evening extract from them. It was a season for gentle and holy musings.

“ And yet,” he reflected, “ how many beings are now enduring the utmost pangs of human anxiety ! The culprits in the gaol—their relatives—my poor Ellen—her father, and myself—Cresford too—the wretch whose very name makes my blood boil ; he—even he, must suffer ! He must feel remorse, repentance—he must have been hurried into this act of unreasonable, useless cruelty, by a sudden impulse of passion. I pity the unfortunate man ! Yes, I pity him—for he has lost her ! Is not that enough to madden him ? Oh ! what will the morrow bring to us all ? What will be our fate ? ” His eyes glanced to the

Heavens; "Whatsoever may be our fates on earth, that placid Heaven, those innumerable stars, those signs of Omnipotence, speak to us of another world, in which happiness must assuredly be my Ellen's portion, and where I may humbly hope to share in that heavenly joy, which we cannot conceive nor comprehend, but in the truth of which we may firmly place our trust!"

Ellen, meanwhile, was in some measure spared the overwhelming anxiety of that night, by another source of disquiet. Agnes was feverish and unwell: perhaps it was a fortunate occurrence for her, that such was the case; under any circumstances she could not have slept. While sitting by the sick bed of her little girl, her thoughts were drawn away from her own miseries; and when, at length, the child dropped off into a calm and easy sleep, the sense of relief almost resembled joy. But to this succeeded the dreadful thought,

"If I should be torn from her! If this should be my last night of watching over her! If she should be worse to-morrow, and I far

away ! Imprisoned ! alone ! and my sick child away from me ! It is possible—very possible ! and I shall survive this ; for I have survived being torn from Algernon, and from my poor George and Caroline !”

CHAPTER XVII.

For thyself

Thou hast had thy fill of vengeance, and perhaps

The cup was sweet ; but it hath left behind

A bitter relish.

SOUTHEY'S RODERICK.

LITTLE Agnes was better in the morning. Ellen's name was not the first on the list ; a common case of burglary was nearly disposed of when she was summoned.

Lord Besville's carriage, as previously arranged, conveyed her to the Court-house. The curious mob gave way, with an expression of pity, as Ellen, assisted by her father, and by Lord Besville, and accompanied by Mr. Turnbull, alighted from the carriage. She was supported through the crowd of black, shabby-genteel, greasy-looking attendants, who are to be found about the purlieus of a court of

justice. She had to wait some minutes in the passage, till the thief who had preceded her at the bar was removed. She was then led in, and placed where he had stood.

There was an universal whisper and commotion throughout the assembly, as her graceful form took the place of the coarse, vulgar, brutal figures, which had usually occupied that spot.

A silence of a moment succeeded. She held by the iron bar before her, as if to sustain herself. A request for a chair was heard from every quarter; and in a few seconds she was enabled to seat herself. There was another pause—Mr. Cresford's lawyer then rose. He felt he had the sense of the court against him—that all instinctive and human feelings must be in favour of the delicate and shrinking creature before them.

She sat shrouded in a wrapping black cloak, her face concealed by a close bonnet, and a thick veil. Scarcely any thing was visible except the slender, rounded, swan-like throat, and one white hand which occasionally clutched the iron bar.

Though one of the ablest men in his profession, he had scarcely his usual self-possession when he began ; but he soon warmed with his subject. The fact of bigamy was clearly to be proved ; and he expatiated upon the feelings of the adoring and deserted husband, and made use of the very interest excited by her appearance, as an argument for the sympathy he deserved, an enhancement of the injury received.

Hamilton had, unobserved, crept into a retired corner. He had heard the eloquent appeal. Accustomed to read the effect produced upon his fellow-creatures by public speaking, he had perceived that the able counsel had affected his audience ; that in truth the very interest excited by Ellen did tell against her. He could not bear the situation any longer. He rushed into the street, and paced it up and down in agonized perturbation. He longed to madness that Colonel Eversham should arrive. His evidence was material. He had continued to hope against all reason that he would appear, and he now felt ready

to accuse him and the Government, the winds and the waves, of cruelty.

At the close of the case for the prosecution, Ellen for the first time raised her eyes, and saw the large round green table, surrounded by the youthful faces of the lawyers in their powdered wigs. She took one fearful glance at their countenances, to see if, accustomed as they were to make their harvest of the woes and the crimes of their fellow-men, there might not be a lurking expression of levity or mirth among them. She ventured one look at the judge. He was a firm, but a venerable and mild-looking man; and she hoped for justice, tempered with mercy, at his hands. One other look towards the jury. She thought she recognized some faces she remembered in her youth.

“Ah! they will have pity on me,” she thought.

The certificates of the two marriages had been produced—the witnesses were called. At this moment a voice was heard in a loud whisper addressing one of the counsel,

“Colonel Eversham is come!”

Ellen looked up. She saw on the right of the judge's seat, at the door by which the lawyers, the high sheriff, &c. had free ingress and egress, Algernon's eager beaming face!

It was the first time she had seen it since they had parted at Belhanger. She gave a faint scream, and uttering his name, fell back in her chair. The assistants who were near at hand quickly lifted up her veil; they took off her bonnet, and in their awkward attentions, they loosened her comb, and her long black hair fell in showers around her. The marble brow, the fringed lids, the pencilled eyebrows, the oval face, the graceful form, caused a sensation of enthusiastic admiration and pity, and tears fell fast from the eyes of the few ladies who had had nerves to attend the trial. They handed smelling-bottles, and drops, and in a few moments she revived. Her father was close at hand, and he supported her drooping head, while the tear-drops coursed one another rapidly down his pallid cheeks.

Cresford stood apart, stern and immovable. He had seen the cause of her agitation; he had

watched the direction of her eye, and the fiend of jealousy possessed his soul, and scared every softer emotion.

The case for the prosecution was quickly closed. Ellen's counsel rose, relieved by finding there was no further evidence produced against his client, than what he was fully prepared to meet, and inspirited by the comfortable assurance that Colonel Eversham was at hand.

Of course he did not attempt to disprove the fact of the two marriages ; but in a clear and circumstantial manner he stated the events with which the reader is already well acquainted, and wound up the whole with so touching a description of the sufferings and virtues of the "exemplary lady then writhing under the unmerited disgrace of being placed in the situation in which they beheld her," that most people present agreed with Will Pollard, that Cresford had no business to be alive. Making a forcible appeal to their feelings, he continued :

"And when we contemplate such unmerited sufferings, does not every thing that is human

in us array itself in her defence? Do we not feel ourselves rather called upon to minister relief, then to inflict punishment? Good God, gentlemen, when we see this blameless lady, the victim of an imposture, (for although perhaps an excusable one, still it was an imposture, an enacted lie,)—when we find her, in consequence of this imposture, deprived of the name to which she was an honour, of the station in society of which she was so bright an ornament,—when we see her torn from her children, and her children bereft of a mother's watchful care,—when we see her thus doubly widowed, severed from the man to whom in innocence and purity of thought she had given her affections at the altar,—from the man who so well deserves and still possesses those affections, of which, gentlemen, we have even now witnessed such affecting evidence,—can we, can we, I say, contemplate such accumulation of unprecedented distress, and call it guilt? Forbid it reason! Forbid it justice! Forbid it truth! And what, in her sorrows, her privations, her bereavement, what does this injured lady ask? But to live in virtuous singleness and seclusion

—to devote her days to her aged father, to her innocent child—the babe from whose bed of sickness she has this day been dragged before you?”

But one feeling prevailed throughout the court. Captain Wareham, Hamilton, Henry Wareham, all felt confident of the result. Every thing that had been stated in favour of Ellen was amply borne out by the newspaper, the account of Maitland's death, and the evidence of Colonel Eversham, who distinctly detailed each particular concerning the supposed death of Cresford, and also declared he had reported every detail to Mrs. Cresford upon his own return to England, which he effected a short time afterwards.

The judge clearly and concisely summed up the evidence, and told the jury it was for them to decide whether the prisoner was, or was not, guilty of the crime with which she was charged.

The jury retired for a few minutes. To Ellen they appeared an age. The whispered hopes and consolations of those around, fell on her ear, without entering into her mind. She

had suffered so much, that she durst not give way to hope.

The jury could not do otherwise than bring in the verdict "guilty" of the crime, though at the same time they recommended the prisoner to mercy. She heard but the first word. A mist came over her eyes, a rushing noise sounded in her ears; she fainted before she had time to hear the sentence of the judge.

He premised that bigamy came under the head of felony, which by the statute 35th of George III. rendered persons liable to the same punishments, pains, and penalties, as those who are convicted of grand, or petit larceny. Under aggravated circumstances, therefore, the punishment might be transportation for seven years;—but under those of the present case, he commanded the prisoner to be fined one shilling, and to be forthwith discharged.

Though unseen himself, Hamilton's eyes had been riveted upon her. He instantly darted to her side when he saw her fall. The impulse was uncontrollable. The sentence had passed, and before he had time to think,

to feel, to reflect, to calculate, he had taken her from Captain Wareham's trembling arms, and had carried her into the lobby. She was still insensible, but he supported that beloved form, and the moment was one of rapture!

She faintly opened her eyes, and it was from his voice that she first heard, "You are free, Ellen, you are free!"

"Free?" and she gazed wildly around her. "Free, from him? May I become lawfully your wife?"

Her scattered senses were not yet collected—she scarcely knew what had passed, or where she was. The words "you are free," sounded in her ear as if the fatal tie was dissolved. He had not the courage to undeceive her, while, under this impression, she leaned weakly, and trustingly on his arm.

Captain Wareham was preparing to explain the meaning of his words, when Cresford rushed forward. His eyes flashed fire, and hastily pushing aside all around, he forced his way by her father, he seized her helpless form, and sternly fixing his hand against Algernon's breast, he forcibly repelled him.

"The law of the land has just pronounced this woman to be my wife, and you—her paramour."

"Unmanly wretch!" and Hamilton's dark eye flashed on him with as infuriated a glance as his own, his lip quivered with rage, but he restrained himself. "Say what you will—insult me—strike me—to me you are sacred." Hamilton drew himself up to his full height, and looked with proud contempt upon Cresford.

Ellen had strength enough to struggle from Cresford's grasp, and to fling herself into her father's arms, who implored him to have pity upon his poor worn-out child, and not to make her the subject of a common brawl, in the public sight.

Angry as Cresford was, he felt that he was only exposing himself to the ridicule, as well as to the blame of all around, and turning to Captain Wareham, he said,

"In your hands—in the hands of her father I am content to leave her. But I owe it to myself, that she should be preserved from one who is avowedly nothing to her. I trust my

wife's honour in your hands, Captain Wareham. When I have seen you and your daughter safely placed in the carriage, which awaits you, I shall depart."

Sternly folding his arms, and placing himself between Hamilton and Ellen, he watched them into Lord Besville's carriage.

Hamilton, ever fearful of adding to Ellen's sufferings, commanded himself, restrained his feelings, and saw her dear form depart, without making a movement to follow or to assist. When the carriage had driven away, Cresford and Hamilton, for one short minute, gazed fixedly on each other; each seemed to wish to look the other dead, but neither spoke. Cresford was not so deprived of all sense of reason, and honour, as to farther insult a man who would not raise his hand against him. Hamilton still maintained his resolution that no provocation should urge him to place an impassable barrier between himself and Ellen.

Each turned on his heel and walked away, with a storm of turbulent and angry passions raging in his bosom. They returned to their respective hotels.

Did Cresford feel the happier for having accomplished his revenge? No! he only felt, if possible, more injured, more miserable, than ever. It is true he had increased the wretchedness of Ellen, but had that afforded his own any alleviation? He had merely given her the occasion of proving how innocently she had contracted her second marriage, and how exemplary had been her conduct, how conscientious and considerate that of his rival, since they had discovered that he was still in existence. He had merely given the world an opportunity of knowing how little share he had in her affections, how dear to her was Hamilton.

Algernon's mind was scarcely less agitated. The sight of Ellen had distracted him. How were they to drag on their weary lives in hopeless absence? The blank and cheerless prospect before them, never struck him so forcibly as now. The excitement of the last six weeks had kept up his spirits. There was something to be done, something to look to, something to hope, something to fear. He felt it impossible to seek again his solitary home;

impossible to pursue any regular fixed course of life, to which there seemed no period, no end, except in the grave. His child, too! his only child was ill. He had a father's longing to see it; he knew not what to do, or how to act. He would not expose Ellen to another outbreak of Cresford's passion, and he at length made up his mind, that if the next day his child was going on well, he would leave the neighbourhood, but that, when Cresford had also departed, he would arrange with Captain Wareham that he should occasionally see his little Agnes.

Poor Ellen had reached her home. Exhausted by the overwhelming emotions of the day, she had scarcely feeling left, to comprehend any thing beyond being restored to her child. Caroline, to whose care she had committed her, and Matilda, whom her father had not allowed to attend the trial, received her in their arms, and almost carried her to her child's bedside.

Little Agnes was better, and Ellen sat close by her, with a vague weak feeling of gratitude to Heaven for re-uniting them. They per-

suaded her to lay herself on the bed by her side, and in a very few moments she was wrapped in slumber, as calm, as placid as the child's.

It was late in the evening before she awoke. Caroline and Matilda were both in the room. She started up. "Is it over?" she cried; "is the trial over? or did I only dream it?"

"It is over, all well over, dearest sister, and you are restored to us."

"Thank you, dear creatures. And my child, she is better; she is sleeping nicely, and quite close to me. Oh, the relief of finding myself among you all, without the fear of those dreadful hulks! Where is my father, my poor father! He has gone through a great deal to-day."

"He has just stolen out of the room. He has been here, looking at you and Agnes, as you both slept, till the tears streamed down his face."

"Oh, let me go to him!" She hastened down-stairs, and poor Captain Wareham felt almost happy when he saw a smile, though it was a troubled and an unquiet one, upon Ellen's lips.

“ Oh, father, I scarcely thought I should ever again feel any thing so near akin to joy as this. If you knew how the horrible idea of transportation preyed upon my mind ! I did not like to own how much I thought of it. At least, I can look round and feel that from all of *you* I need not now be parted. Yet mixed with this sensation of joy, which is so strange to me, there comes such a yearning for George and Caroline, my poor dear children, whom I must not see. Oh ! if I could kiss them once, if I could look upon them, if I could know they were well ! My poor dear innocent children !” She sat down and wept freely, weakly, gently, as a person utterly worn out, body and mind.

Latterly she had not spoken much of her elder children ; her mind had been bent to the one point, and the fear of another, still more dreadful misfortune, had prevented her dwelling so much on their absence. But now that her heart, for the first time, gave way to this unwonted feeling of happiness, she longed for their presence with a passionate desire.

She breathed not Algernon’s name. But

when they all retired to rest, and she found herself alone in her chamber, she seated herself in an arm-chair, and covering her eyes with her hands, she yielded herself up to a sort of dreamy but delightful consciousness that she had seen him, heard him ; that her eye had met his, that her head had rested on his shoulder, that his voice had sounded in her ear. She dreaded to move, and to rouse herself to the sad prospect that she was to see him no more—that days, months, years, must roll on, and she must meet those eyes, and hear that voice no more !

But this weakness was not to be indulged ; she shook it off, and calmed and refreshed her soul with humble and grateful prayer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Cher petiot, bel amy, tendre fils que j'adore,
Cher enfanton, mon soulcy, mon amour,
Te voy, mon fils, te voy, et veux te veoir encore,
Pour ce trop brief me semblent nuict et jour.

CLOTILDE DE SUVILLE, 13TH CENTURY.

THE next morning Captain Wareham, at Ellen's request, wrote a note to Algernon to tell him she was well, and that little Agnes was rapidly recovering, and also to assure him that Ellen's mind was comparatively at ease. In his answer to Captain Wareham he told him that having heard so satisfactory an account of those in whose welfare his every feeling was centered, he should quit * * *, as he feared his presence in the town might occasion Crawford's also remaining there, in jealous irritation; but that he trusted, when every thing was

quiet, and Cresford, (as he flattered himself he would,) had resumed his habits of business, he might be allowed to visit his child; that he likewise claimed some pity, and that a father's heart yearned towards his only child. He said no more. He wished to accustom her to the idea that he must, that he ought to see Agnes, and he hoped by degrees to persuade Ellen to allow him an interview herself.

Cresford, as Hamilton had anticipated, left * * * when he had ascertained his rival's departure, and he returned to London. He then entered with ardour into the concerns of the house,—peremptorily insisted upon the speedy adjustment of the affairs, which had been rendered perplexed by his return, and resolved that he would make himself a name as the first and greatest of English merchants. If, in private life, he stood in the contemptible position of the discarded, the deserted husband, in the world he would be respected as one of the most leading men in the city. But his mind, weakened, excited, and unsettled by what he had undergone, was not equal to accomplishing all he undertook. His schemes were wild and

visionary, and neither added to the stability, nor to the consideration of the house.

Henry Wareham, who had lost no time in withdrawing himself, had found little difficulty in gaining admittance into another establishment of equal, if not greater note: his capital, which, though not large, had increased during the time he had formed one in the Cresford partnership, his character for steadiness and industry, and his clear practical head, making him an acquisition in any concern, while the cause of his retirement from his present business, excited an interest in his favour.

There is no want of generous and kind feeling in this country. A case of undeserved misfortune, if once known and understood, rarely fails to create friends, and protectors.

Ellen's ardent desire to see her elder children increased, rather than diminished, with time. The savage wildness of Cresford's eye and manner, filled her with uneasiness for their fate. Henry had ascertained that he had taken for them a small house at Brompton, and that he visited them once or twice a week. The *bonne*, whom she had placed about them,

she knew to be a good creature, although not possessed of much information, nor by any means the person to whom she would willingly have entrusted the complete guidance of their minds and characters. Still she was grateful that he left them under her care, and she rejoiced that he did not habitually live with them, and that consequently they were not exposed to the starts of passion which, even in better days, had been formidable.

She thought if she could once see them, unknown to themselves,—merely see them as they passed by, and ascertain that they looked healthy and happy, that she should feel more contented.

She opened this idea one day to Captain Wareham, who treated it as fanciful and romantic. The irritability of temper, which, during the time of great and serious distress completely subsided, had gradually again grown into a habit. He was too old to alter, and although his heart was most kind, his feelings for Ellen tender, yet in the every-day intercourse of life she could not avoid sometimes perceiving that she brought much trouble,

and discomfort upon him, in the decline of life.

She proposed a visit to Caroline and to Mr. Allenham, who had urged her completing the cure of little Agnes by trying change of air. She knew that the kind-hearted Caroline would willingly agree to any plan which might promise her a moment's comfort, and if Mr. Allenham would give his consent, she could not have more respectable sanction and assistance.

Caroline, as she expected, was all good-nature, nor did Mr. Allenham disapprove of the idea. He saw that she was in so restless a state, that she was so possessed with the notion that if her children were sick, she would not be apprized of their illness, that they might be dying, and she remain in ignorance,—that he really thought it desirable her mind should be relieved upon this subject. One thing he premised,—that she should not make herself known to them. If it ever came to Cresford's ears, he might secrete them where she would have no means of hearing or knowing about them; and at all events it would be wrong to excite curiosity, useless regrets, or premature

sensibilities in the children; still more so to accustom them to mystery and concealment. She saw the reason of his arguments: all she begged was to be allowed to disguise herself in the dress of a common maid-servant, and to walk in the street near which they lived, till she could once see them pass along, healthy and cheerful.

In compliance with her wishes, they all three repaired to London. Ellen and Caroline dressed themselves in the most homely apparel, and Ellen solemnly promised Mr. Allenham to do nothing which might cause herself to be recognised. They entered a shop nearly opposite the dwelling which contained her children. Mrs. Allenham busied herself bargaining for threads, tapes, and ribbons, while Ellen stood near the door, half out of sight, watching with a palpitating heart, and eyes which were almost blinded with intense gazing, the windows, the doors of the house.

After some time the sash was thrown up, and she saw her own little Caroline run into the balcony. The child looked well and blooming; her fair hair hanging down her back in

glossy ringlets, her laughing eyes sparkling with gaiety, her cheeks glowing with health ! Those ringlets which she had so often fondly twisted through her fingers, those eyes she had so often kissed, those cheeks which had so often been pillowed to rest upon her bosom !

She had pledged herself to do nothing to attract attention,—and she kept her word. But a fearful chill ran through her. Where was George ? Why was not he playing with his sister ? Was he ill ? She could no longer watch every graceful movement of Caroline, so agonizingly did she look for her boy. George, the playful, the high-spirited George, what could keep him within ? The suspense was almost too much to endure without betraying herself. She had nearly made up her mind to ask the shop people, in as unconcerned a tone as she could command, whether they had lately seen the little boy who lived opposite. She had approached Mrs. Allenham, and had grasped her arm in almost speechless tremor, when she saw George appear for one moment at the window, and beckon his sister in. She breathed again, and, seating

herself for a few moments, recovered her self-possession. Mrs. Allenham had turned round with an anxious look of inquiry.

"It is nothing," whispered Ellen, "it is all right now!"

"Are you ready to go," rejoined Caroline.

"Yes—oh, no, wait a few minutes longer." She returned to the door to look once more. All was quiet—no one was to be seen at the window. At length Caroline could devise no fresh articles to purchase, and they left the shop. At that moment the door opened, and bounding down the steps, she saw both children with rosy cheeks, and active forms, and radiant faces.

She stopped, trembling, and gazed till they were out of sight. They passed on, unconscious and contented, each holding a hand of the good old *bonne*, and jumping as they went with the light-hearted merriment of childhood. She faithfully made no sign, nor movement that should attract attention, and turned her steps towards their temporary domicile, satisfied and relieved; but, such is the inconsistency of the human heart, that, anxious as she

was to know them happy, a painful feeling shot through her to think how joyous they were without her. While she—yet she wished them to be joyous, though it was bitter to think her children should grow up without any love for her, any recollection of her.

If such thoughts did cross her mind, they found not utterance in words. She professed herself satisfied, and they returned to Longbury. She loved Longbury; it was there she had first seen Algernon. It was there he had first breathed his vows of love; it was there she had, as she then fancied, bound herself to him by ties, which death only was to sever.

Since the trial, Cresford insisted upon her receiving alimony from him. It was painful to her to do so; but he would have been furious at the idea of her being beholden to Hamilton. Her father, though he had the will, had not the means of supporting her; and feeling also that her miseries tended rather to depress him, and to throw a gloom over the youth of Matilda, she retired to a very small cottage in the outskirts of the town,

and there resided in the deepest retirement, seeking consolation in the performance of the few duties which remained to her to fulfil,—devotion to her child, and attention to the poor around her; her only amusement, the cultivation of her tiny flower-garden.

The neighbouring peasants soon learned to look upon her as their friend, and applied to her in all cases of distress. She had heard Algernon's opinions upon the mischief produced by indiscriminate charity, and she tried so to regulate her's, as not to reward the idle and complaining, while the frugal, industrious, and contented, were unnoticed, and unassisted. She felt, while making this her study, that she was in some measure executing his wishes. How well she succeeded in doing real good, is another question. The task is one of great difficulty; but she succeeded in making herself loved by all the best of her poor neighbours, though she might occasionally be imposed upon by some of the worst.

Her gentle words, her good advice, her attempts to convert the wicked, and to console the suffering, could do no harm, even when they failed of effecting good.

CHAPTER XIX.

Las ! Si j'avois pouvoir d'oublier
Sa beauté, sa beauté, son bien dire,
Et son tant doux, tant doux regarder,
Finiroit mon martire.
Mais, Las ! Mon cœur je n'en puis ôter ;
Et grand affollage
M'est d'espérer,
Mais tel servage
Donne courage
À tout endurer.
Et puis comment, comment oublier
Sa beauté, sa beauté, son bien dire,
Et son tant doux, tant doux regarder ?
Mieux aime mon martire.

—*Complainte à la Reine Blanche, par Thibaut.*

SOME months had now elapsed. Algernon ventured to write to Ellen herself, describing to her his life of loneliness. He assured her that if he might look forward to the prospect of seeing her and his child at stated periods,

however rare, however distant, he might again be able to exert himself, and strive to be an active and an useful member of society. That at present his existence appeared so aimless, so hopeless, that he could not rouse himself to attend to public, any more than to private affairs.

These arguments were to her irresistible. She knew too well what were the yearnings of a parent for his child, and she would not inflict upon Algernon what she herself endured.

His fame too ! His position in the world ! His utility to his fellow-creatures ! Her pride in his fame, was second only to her love for himself, and though she would not have consented to that which was wrong in itself, even for his sake, she thought she might promise to see him once in every six months, and in the presence of her father, without compromising herself.

Having consulted Captain Wareham, and obtained his consent to this plan, she wrote Algernon word, that she agreed to his proposition, but that he must give her due warning of his coming, and that she would not see him

except in the presence of her father. That she would meet him as a dear and valued friend, but they must not indulge in vain repinings, or in useless or sinful hopes.

Her letter was calm, it cost her much to make it so—but it was calm.

Such as it was, it infused new life into Algernon. He doubted not her love. He respected her scruples. He was so happy at having gained that much, that he did not quarrel with the measured style. He should see her again! He should again hear the music of her voice! And his eye beamed once more with hope—he moved with a more elastic step.

The very servants observed the altered aspect of their master, and Mrs. Topham remarked, as he walked by the windows of the housekeeper's room to the stables, that she "had not heard her master tread so light and quick, since her poor mistress went away;" she wondered "what ever had come to him!"

He appointed the day following that on which Ellen should receive his answer—the hour one o'clock. And meanwhile he was in a

restless state of joyful expectancy, which allowed him to fix his mind to nothing.

He thought a hack chaise was the most unobtrusive mode of conveyance, and that which was least likely to excite observation, and he departed on his journey alone.

With what feelings did Ellen await his arrival? She strove to preserve the even composure of her mind, but in vain !

“Algernon will find me sadly altered,” she thought, as she arranged her dress with more attention to what was becoming than she had done for many months. “This mode of dressing my hair makes me look ten years older, and my cheeks are grown so thin !” She checked herself for the vain thought, “What business have I to wish to look well in his eyes now? I ought not to think of such things.” But we will not pledge ourselves that she might not pass rather more time at her toilette that morning, than she had usually done ; perhaps she was almost sorry she had adopted the habit of wearing her hair smoothly parted on her brow, instead of in the luxuriant ringlets which used

to fall in showers on her cheeks. Yet had she nothing to regret. The touching, holy, Madonna-like expression of her countenance at present, fully compensated for what she might have lost in brilliancy.

To Agnes's appearance, however, she devoted herself, without any fear of doing wrong, and the blooming little creature amply repaid her cares. She was now able to lisp a few words, and Ellen had taught her to say Papa, and bade her be sure so to call the gentleman who was coming, as soon as she saw him. Captain Wareham had walked down early to Ellen's cottage, and they remained waiting in perturbed expectation. Ellen felt confused. Her situation was so strange—so new. There was no precedent by which to shape her conduct. But she had the best of guides: her guileless heart, her innate purity.

Exactly as the clock struck one, a post-chaise drove to the door. In one second Algernon sprang from it; in another, he was in the drawing-room.

Ellen's heart beat, till she thought her

bosom would burst. Algernon rushed towards her—but she extended her hand to him before he approached her, and he merely pressed it to his lips in speechless agitation.

“Look at your child, Algernon,” she said, as soon as she could command utterance; “she looks quite well now.”

“I will, I will—but at this moment I can see nothing but you.”

Ellen withdrew her hand, and seated herself in an arm-chair.

“You have not spoken to my father,” she added.

Algernon brushed his hand across his eyes, and turning to Captain Wareham, he pressed his in silence.

Little Agnes whispered,

“Mamma, is that the gentleman I am to call Papa?”

“Yes, my love, go to him!” and the obedient child timidly advanced a few steps. Algernon caught her in his arms, and devoured her with kisses, while the tears flowed fast down his manly cheeks.

The tears of a man are always powerfully affecting. What must the tears which Algernon shed over their child, have been to Ellen? She did not weep. She had worked herself up to be firm, and not to allow this interview to lead to any out-pourings of the heart, to any expressions of feelings, for which she might afterwards reproach herself.

At length Algernon spoke.

“Our child, Ellen, is not like you,” and he looked from one to the other with eyes of such melting tenderness, that it would have been difficult to say, to which, at that moment, his heart went forth most.

“Oh, no!” she exclaimed, “thank Heaven, she is like you!” but she presently added in a more composed manner: “She has quite recovered her looks, and her strength now.

She loved to hear Algernon say *our* child. And yet how strange to see the father of her child, clasp it to his bosom, shed tears of love over it, and to be obliged to keep up a calm, company, conversation.

Captain Wareham now inquired which road

Algernon had taken, whether the rain had not made it very bad travelling, and a few more such interesting questions.

“ Did you come straight from Belhanger ?” asked Ellen in a low and tremulous voice.

“ I left it yesterday afternoon.”

“ It must look very pretty, now the spring is come ; and is my—is the garden very nice ?” One silent tear stole down Ellen’s cheek as she spoke.

“ *Your* garden is lovely ! It might be a paradise ! but to me, it is a place of torment.”

“ Oh do not say that ! Algernon. But you do not look well. You have come a great way this morning ; you must be hungry ; will you not have some luncheon ?”

“ Hungry !” he said, and gave her a half reproachful glance ; “ thank you, I could not eat !”

Captain Wareham now inquired what Hamilton’s political friends thought of the Spanish war, and whether the Spaniards were sincerely attached to the cause of liberty.

“ I do not know, my dear sir. I never com-

municate with my political friends. I know nothing about them."

Ellen's heart smote her, that she should be the cause of his abandoning a career for which he was so well fitted.

"This must not be," she said; "you ought to exert yourself, Algernon. Indeed this is not right!"

"But tell me, Ellen, how do you pass your time? What occupations have you?"

"I will tell you what she does, Mr. Hamilton," interrupted Captain Wareham, "she goes about doing good, and there is not a poor distressed creature within miles, that does not know her, and bless her."

Algernon at first felt vexed with Captain Wareham for taking up the answer to his question, for he longed to hear the music of Ellen's voice; but he no longer regretted it was her father who had spoken, for the report of her good deeds was equally sweet in his ear.

"God will bless you also, Ellen!"

"I wish to remember all you have told me about the management of the poor, and I hope

I do not encourage the idle; but I have no influence here, and I cannot give them good cottages, and gardens, as you have done, and have thus enabled them to live comfortably, without charity. Are the cottages as nice as ever?"

"I believe they are. Yes, they look very neat as I ride by."

"And how is poor old Amy Underwood?"

"Dead — poor old soul! She died last winter."

"Poor Amy! So she is at rest! Who takes care of her little grand-daughter?— She made me promise I would always be a friend to her when she was gone. Algernon, you will see that the child is religiously and virtuously brought up. I cannot,—you know."

"Yes, yes! that I will! Can you think of nothing else for me to do? Tell me more protégés of your's, that I may attend to them. Express your wishes, give me your orders. You will invest anew Belhanger with interest in my eyes. You will give me something to live for."

Ellen smiled faintly, and gratefully.

“Have pretty Jane Earle and her husband got a cottage yet? If they had a tidy cottage to themselves, it might confirm him in his reformation; now he has such a pretty wife too.”

In this manner Ellen endeavoured to lead him to again interest himself in his peasantry, while to herself there was a certain melancholy pleasure in uttering the names, and picturing the spots, once so familiar to her.

Agnes meantime had nestled herself comfortably into his arms. Perhaps she had some indistinct recollection of him; perhaps it was merely the caprice which sometimes makes children immediately attach themselves to one person, while they take an antipathy to another, but from the first moment she seemed attracted by him. Ellen looked at them, and thought how happy were those, who might in peace and honour, gaze every day of their lives upon their child, and the father of their child.

The hour for departure approached. At four o'clock the chaise was again to be at the

door. Captain Wareham's dinner-hour was five, and he had to walk back into the town.

In a clear and gentle voice Ellen addressed Algernon—

“One thing I wished to ask you, Algernon, before you went. Should you not like to have Agnes pay you a visit at Belhanger?”

“Not for worlds, Ellen, would I rob you of her for a moment!” It was true that he would not have robbed her for a moment of that which was her only pleasure; but he also wished to put an end to such an idea, as it would deprive him of his one excuse for seeing Ellen. “And are we not to meet again for six months, Ellen?” he added, after a pause.

She exerted all her might, and answered—

“Not for six months.”

“I may write to you?”

“No; we must not correspond. If Agnes should be ill, of course I will let you know; and if you should be ill, you must write to me. For God's sake, write if anything should be the matter!” she repeated with an expres-

sion of terror from the image she had herself conjured up.

The chaise had been some time announced. Captain Wareham, though from the bottom of his heart he pitied them both, thought there was no use in prolonging this distressing interview—to himself doubly so, for he felt himself a third; and yet Ellen had made him promise to give her the support of his presence. She thought, if the interview should not remain unknown, (and what does remain unknown in the present civilized state of society?) her fair name could not suffer if it was conducted under the sanction of her father.

Algernon had kissed his child; he had wrung Captain Wareham's hand; Ellen had risen from her seat, and again held forth her hand to him.

"May Heaven bless you, my dear and valued friend!" she said.

"Ellen! my own Ellen!"

"You had better go now," she gently replied. "My father is not so young as he

was, and we must not make him too late for his dinner. This day six months we meet again !”

Algernon replied not. Slowly and reluctantly he left the room : he dared not remonstrate ; he knew her firmness to do what she deemed right, and he feared by word or deed to lose the grace he had obtained : he threw himself into his carriage, and drove away.

Captain Wareham walked home to dinner, and Ellen at length gave way to the tumult of feelings which she had resolutely subdued.

It would be impossible to say whether joy at having seen him, or sorrow at having parted from him, preponderated : she certainly found it more difficult to resume the occupations to which she had accustomed herself ; but still she had a point to look to, a bright speck in the distant horizon, to lead her on through the cheerless desert of life.

Algernon religiously executed all Ellen's innocent behests, and, for her sake, did resume in some measure his former habits of

practical utility : he attended Parliament—he was put upon committees — his eye once more flashed with fire—his countenance recovered its animation, his manner its energy.

His re-appearance in the world was hailed with joy by all who knew, and consequently loved and respected him. Though there was still a corroding care within—though there was still a cheerless void in his heart, yet when once he began again to mix with his fellow men, and to enter into public affairs, there were so many objects to interest and occupy a man, that the next six months were not to him so immeasurably long as to Ellen.

At the appointed day and hour he was again at the cottage, and claimed her approving smile for his obedience to her wishes. She had carefully spelled every newspaper, waded through columns of parliamentary debates on subjects she could not comprehend, for fear of missing, or not properly appreciating, some short reply of his ; but it had been with joy she had seen his name frequently among the

speakers, and her approving smile was not wanting to reward him.

When his parliamentary duties were over, he found his lone and loveless home so cheerless that he again became a frequent visiter at Coverdale Park, and Ellen often heard of him when there, through Caroline. It was a consolation to him to see Ellen's sister, and to talk to her of past happiness. Lord and Lady Coverdale were friendly people, and Miss Coverdale was a gentle, pleasing girl, who loved Ellen with the enthusiastic warmth of admiration, which girls often feel for a young married woman a few years older than themselves.

The consciousness that she did full justice to his beloved Ellen, that she had tact and discrimination enough to perceive her superiority to other people, formed a bond of union between them, and the Coverdales were almost the only family of his former acquaintance, from whose society Algernon appeared to derive any pleasure.

From his frequent visits, and from the in-

timacy which subsisted between him and Miss Coverdale, reports arose which immediately came to the ears of Mrs. Allenham. Some people have the faculty of always hearing news, and Caroline was one of those.

She knew how totally groundless was such an idea; but she thought if such gossip should reach * * *, it might be very unpleasant to Ellen, and that she should do well to warn her against giving any credit to it. In short, to prevent her hearing it, she immediately wrote her word of it.

She told her "It was quite a foolish notion of some meddlesome neighbours; that Algernon's pleasure in the society at Coverdale, was principally on account of their all knowing Ellen so well, and because Coverdale was so near Longbury;" and she bade her "not fret herself at all, if she did hear such silly things said."

The very possibility that Algernon should think of any other wife, or that people should imagine he could think of any one else, was almost agonizing to Ellen. She instantly

drove the suspicion from her mind. She felt too certain of his unceasing affection for her. Yet when she had done so, she reproached herself for selfishness, in wishing to doom him to a life of singleness—him so formed for every domestic affection. She told herself she ought rather to wish he should find happiness with another, as she was for ever precluded from contributing to it.

“But I am sure,” she thought, “quite sure, there is no truth in the report. I know him too well!”

Still the rumour having ever arisen was disagreeable. Implicit as was her reliance on his devotion, it proved how completely he was looked upon in the world, as a free man. How entirely null and void, the world considered her marriage to him. She knew it. The fact had been too painfully proved and ascertained! but she experienced a sense of humiliation, that it was so decided by the law of opinion, as well as by the law of the land.

CHAPTER XX.

God doth not leave the unhappy soul, without
An inward monitor, and till the grave
Open, the gate of mercy is not closed.

SOUTHEY'S RODERICK.

CRESFORD, as we have before mentioned, had given his mind to business ; but his visionary schemes of aggrandizement had not proved successful. He had, on the contrary, involved the concern in considerable embarrassments, and to retrieve all, he ventured on a still bolder speculation;—which failed !

In a few words, the house broke.

He had gone through much during the time that these difficulties had been thickening around him, and when at last the storm, which had been long gathering, broke upon his head, it found him totally unequal to bearing up

against it,—in impotent anger against himself, and every one else.

It was galling to his spirit, to find that by his rashness and imprudence he had reduced from affluence to a state of indigence, men who had been honestly labouring all their lives. For himself, if he could not make himself a name, as one of the richest merchants of the great emporium of commerce, he cared not if he were the poorest. But he felt for his children. He loved them, though it was not with a tender love. He meant his son should be as great a man as any in the kingdom ; he intended that his daughter should be the most accomplished of girls ; he would have spared nothing for their education.

Ellen first learned the failure of his house from the public papers, and she mourned over the altered fortunes of her children. She grieved too for the unfortunate man who seemed doomed to have his hopes blasted in this world, while his earthly sorrows had not as yet softened or prepared his heart for happiness in another.

Her brother Henry soon wrote her word of some further particulars, and informed her that

the firm would be able to pay a good dividend in the pound ; so that, although a bankruptcy, it would not be a disgraceful one. He had called to inquire about Cresford, and the answer was that he had been ill, but was now better, though not well enough to receive visitors. Henry could not ascertain what prospects there were for his future provision ; but promised to let her know when he could learn any thing farther.

Pity swallowed up all other feelings, and she anxiously awaited the result. Henry again wrote to her. He had called a second time, and was refused admittance. The servant shook his head, and said "He feared his master was very ill. The doctors said they could do nothing for him unless his mind was kept quiet, and as for keeping his mind quiet, that was impossible. He was night and day poring over papers, and the lawyers were with him two or three times a day ; if they did not come, he kept sending for them, so there was no use in telling them not to trouble him till he got a little better." The servant added, he thought "it would be a good thing if he

would go to Brompton, and be with his children for a while; but it made him worse to talk of that. He said he could not bear to think of his poor ruined children, much less to see them."

Ellen's heart bled for him. She sometimes considered within herself whether duty did not call her to him in his present miserable state. But perhaps her presence might only irritate him; and even if he did wish for it, could she bring herself to attend his summons? She scarcely thought she could do so. She begged Henry to discover whether he ever mentioned her name. It would be a relief to know he did not think of her.

Henry, the next time he called, sounded the servant, who was an old acquaintance of his, as he had been porter at the time when Henry belonged to the house. He could not find that Cresford ever alluded to his wife. Once, when he was very ill, he had said, "If I get worse, let her be written to!" without mentioning any name.

Ellen's mind was set at ease upon this subject. She had nothing to do but patiently to wait the event.

It was some time before she heard again, and then it was from Henry, to say he had seen Cresford. That, having learned he was considerably worse, he had again called, and had ventured to send up word that he was there. That Cresford had admitted him, and that he had been shocked at the havoc which a few months had made in his appearance. That he was certainly very ill, but he thought it was the mind, which preyed upon the body—the sword consuming the scabbard; his face was haggard—his eye was restless—his voice feeble and hollow. There seemed to be no positive complaint, except a slight but frequent cough. He spoke much of his affairs—said he did not care for himself, but he lamented the fate of his children. That, perhaps, his schemes had been imprudent, but that his partners hampered him. They would not enter into his views, and their timid prudence prevented his projects being carried on, in the only manner which could lead to a successful termination, boldly and gallantly as they had been conceived.

“God knows,” he added, “what remnant of fortune may be saved from the wreck, or whe-

ther I may have anything to allow—your sister. That thought torments me past all others. She will be supported by Hamilton after all!”

Henry added that he had done all he could to tranquillize his mind—had told him how few her wants were; that he and Captain Wareham would do their utmost to supply them—in short, said all the soothing things he could. He had left him with the promise of calling again in a few days.

Before these few days had elapsed, Ellen received an express from Henry, imploring her to come forthwith to London—that a change for the worse had taken place, and that the physicians thought Cresford could not survive many days, perhaps not many hours. That, upon being made aware of their opinion, he had expressed a passionate desire to see her, and that he thought she ought to lose no time in acceding to it.

In two hours from the moment she received Henry's letter, Ellen was on her way to London, having left little Agnes with her father and Matilda. Captain Wareham was not well, and was quite unequal to so sudden a journey.

The journey was long. She had time to think, and to think of every thing: of every probability, of every possibility. But there was one on which she dared not allow her mind to rest.

What was to happen if Cresford died? She felt it criminal to look forward to what would then ensue. If he recovered, what then? Would her visit to his bed of sickness be a reconciliation? Could he wish to take her back, when he knew her whole heart was another's? What would, what could happen? She strove not to look forward beyond the present moment. She had but one course to pursue. She could not refuse such an appeal from a dying man, and that man her lawful husband. The path of duty was clear; for the rest, she must trust to Providence for guidance and support.

She first drove to her brother's lodgings: she found him there. His countenance betrayed anxiety, his brow was care-worn.

"He is yet alive," he said; "I sat up with him all night. In your absence he will scarcely allow me to leave him."

"Oh, Henry, this is an awful meeting!

How will he receive me? Does he feel kindly towards me? Or must I endure his reproaches from his death-bed?"

"He is entirely changed; he is gentle and forgiving now; all his former love for you seems to have revived."

"That is almost worse! Poor Charles! His love has ever been a source of woe to both of us."

Henry lost no time in conveying her to Cresford's house, which was attached to the office, and, although not in the most fashionable part of London, was roomy and commodious, and was usually inhabited by the head-partner of the concern. In that house, she had passed four years as his wife.

It was with painful recollections, and painful anticipations that she traversed the stone-hall, and mounted the broad, but dismal oak staircase, once so familiar to her.

Henry left her in the drawing-room, while he went up-stairs to prepare Cresford for her arrival. She looked round; there were the curtains which she had chosen, the carpet, the sofas, of her selection—now dirty and dingy with years of London wear.

Henry returned. He said the physicians were at that moment visiting their patient, and that when they left the room, he would apprize him of her arrival. She had still to wait. When once the mind is worked up to the performance, or the endurance of any thing disagreeable, or painful, a few additional moments of suspense are almost agonizing.

She mechanically took the hand-skreen off the chimney-piece. It was one she had herself ornamented with wafer cameos, and little scraps of verses. The gold paper was all tarnished, the cameos broken, the writing half effaced, but she could still distinguish some lines, which carried her back to the feelings of former days, and the emotions under which they had been selected, till the flood of recollections which crowded upon her almost bewildered her.

In the course of ten minutes, the physicians entered. Ellen felt awkward and confused. They must think her presence so odd! She knew not what tone to take, and it was with timidity and shyness that she ventured to ask what was their opinion of Mr. Cresford.

The taller, a pale, slender man, with a sweet

countenance, and soft manner, informed her, "That he could not venture to say the symptoms had improved; that the lungs, and the heart both seemed to be affected, and that although he might linger some time, or indeed, might ultimately recover, still a fatal termination might take place in a few hours—that it was a case in which medicine could do little or nothing!" and having delivered this most conclusive, and luminous opinion, he sat himself down to a table, and there wrote prescriptions for some draughts, some pills, an aromatic mixture, a liniment, and a warm plaster for the chest, and prepared to take his leave.

The second physician, who was a short, thick man, with a bob-wig, stood quietly by, while there played around his mouth something approaching a smile, at the inutility of all these measures at the present stage of the disorder.

Ellen ventured to turn to him with an inquiring countenance.

"Madam," he said, "if you wish to know my opinion, it is that he cannot recover. He is too far gone for that. But we do not justly

know what his complaint is, so we may prove wrong, and while there is life there is hope. So I wish you a good morning!" and away he trudged, having made a short, abrupt bow to Ellen.

When they were gone, she sat down for a few moments, and tried to collect her thoughts for the interview which approached.

She heard Henry's step on the stairs; her heart felt sick within her—his hand was on the lock of the door.

"Now, Ellen!" he said, "Cresford is tolerably composed. But how pale you are! Shall I get you any thing?—a glass of water?"

"Nothing! thank you; I am quite well now."

She took Henry's arm, and he led her up stairs. He gently opened the door—the apartment was darkened. As they entered, the nurse discreetly slipped past them out of the room.

Coming from the full light, Ellen could scarcely see. She approached the bed; he was propped up with pillows, and cushions, almost

in a sitting posture. She could distinguish that he looked ghastly; she shook from head to foot, and leaned heavily on Henry's arm.

"Ellen! are you come at last? I was afraid you would not have arrived in time. I am ill—very ill—and I wished to see you once more; you will soon be free of me, and then—but I wished to see you, and to forgive you for all I have suffered on your account, and to ask your forgiveness for having made you miserable too. I ought not to have brought you to a trial;—it was a bad feeling of revenge which drove me to it, and I repent it now; but I was maddened—goaded to desperation. Ellen! I have loved you fearfully! I have loved you unto death—for I am dying of a broken heart! The doctors do not know my complaint—I can tell it them!"

Ellen had sunk on her knees by the bedside. She sobbed audibly.

"Tell me you are sorry for me," he continued; "and tell me that you forgive me, as truly as I forgive you."

"Oh, Charles! you know I do pity you, and I have from the beginning. I have not

wilfully done any thing to increase your wretchedness. As for forgiving you, that I do, indeed, from the bottom of my heart."

"Well, I have your pity!—and your forgiveness!—your love I never had!"

There was a mixture of dejection and of hardness in the tone in which the last few words were uttered. Ellen could not reply. It would have been a glaring falsehood, to say it was true love she had ever felt for him; an impious, and an useless falsehood, to lie to one on the verge of eternity.

Turning to Henry, he inquired,

"Are the children come yet? I wanted to bless them, and to bless my wife too; for you are still my wife, Ellen!—as long as I am alive, you are my wife—I am your husband!"

There was a shade of his former stern, and violent manner, which made Ellen shudder to her inmost soul.

"Are my children coming?" she faintly asked.

"Yes! I sent for them hours ago. Why do they not come, Henry Wareham?" he inquired, in a peremptory and authoritative voice.

"I expect them every moment," replied Henry.

"Ellen, come nearer!" She drew nearer. He extended his thin, and bony hand. "Give me your hand—no! the other!" He took her left hand, and looking solemnly in her face, "Who put that ring on your finger?" he said. She could not reply. She had never had the heart to take off the ring Algernon had placed there; and in all the agitation of the last day, she had not remembered any thing concerning the rings. "Is that the ring I placed upon that finger?" and he held her hand with a firmness that appalled her: "answer me, and answer me truly!"

"No!" she faintly replied.

He dashed the hand he held away from him, with a strength of which all who had seen him for the last few days, would have deemed him utterly incapable.

She tremblingly drew off the ring, and offered it to him, as a token of submission, and recognition of her duty to him.

"Take it away!—destroy it!—I cannot look on it!" He turned away his head, and

spoke with a vehemence which alarmed them. "Throw it into the fire—let me know it is consuming."

In humble penitence for having, by her inadvertence, so embittered the last moments of the unhappy man's life, she walked to the fire, and, as he bade, committed the treasured ring to the flames. As she was doing so, she felt her soul die away within her.

He had raised himself up with the unnatural strength of great excitement to witness the execution of his behest, and he fell back exhausted and faint. He gasped for breath. Henry and Ellen hastened to him. They thought his last moment was approaching; but he rallied. "Where is the ring I placed upon your finger?"

"It is at home: I put it carefully away when—"

"Speak on; finish your sentence."

"When—the other—was placed there."

"You have kept it, then? You did not cast it away?"

"Indeed I preserved it religiously. Are you not the father of my children?" she added in a gentle deprecating tone. "Oh,

Charles, do not thus agitate yourself! Be calm, be patient. We are all weak, frail, erring creatures; we should mutually forgive, as we hope to be forgiven. Your children will soon be here, and let them not see their father thus perturbed and restless." She paused.

"Speak on; your voice does soothe my perturbed and restless spirit; speak on, Ellen,—and come here to the light. Open the curtains, Henry; let me look on her face while my eyes can yet see."

She stood trembling beneath his fixed and melancholy gaze. "Oh, Ellen, how I have loved you! I am too near the grave to curse any one, or else I could breathe forth a malediction on that tyrant, who, in his unmanly, deliberate, and useless vengeance, has blighted the prospects, ruined the characters, and blasted the hopes, both in this world and the next, of hundreds of unoffending fellow-creatures. I am not his only victim! Mine is not the only ruin of body and mind for which he is answerable! But I will forgive, as I hope to be forgiven. Ellen, repeat the Lord's prayer to me; I think from your voice it will do me good."

Ellen and Henry knelt by the bed-side, and Ellen, reverently and humbly, obeyed him. As she spoke, his eyes gradually closed, and soon after he fell into a short but refreshing slumber.

When he awoke, the nurse stole in, to inform them that the children were come. He bade them enter.

It was now more than a year since they had been parted from their mother, and when they unexpectedly saw her, they ran to her arms in silent joy. They made no exclamation, for the subdued voices of all the attendants, the darkened room, the vague awe of a death-bed, overpowered their young minds, and prevented any burst of delight. They clung round her, and she folded them to her bosom, with mingled emotions, in which pleasure bore no inconsiderable part.

“Children,” said Cresford in a gentle tone.

“Your father speaks,” Ellen hastily whispered; “go to him, my loves.”

“My children,” he continued, “kneel here by my bed-side: I wish to give you my blessing, my parting blessing. Be good, and never

let your passions get the better of you. Mind what your mother says, for she is an excellent and a conscientious woman, and she will teach you your duties. Ellen, I give you my blessing, too; may you be happy!"

Ellen was on her knees. She seized his pale hand as it lay feebly on the bed, and covered it with tears and kisses. He smiled faintly and gratefully upon her, and pressed her hand. He soon again dropped off to sleep.

The children were removed, but Ellen remained. She had an earnest wish to do her duty by him to the last.

In the evening, when the physicians came, they found him considerably better; the sleep he had enjoyed had refreshed him. His pulse was steadier, he was able to take some nourishment, and they appeared almost to imagine permanent improvement might take place.

These words fell strangely on Ellen's ear. She could not but rejoice in his amendment. Dreadful as was the prospect for herself, it was not in the nature of any thing so gentle, so feminine, so forgiving as Ellen, to watch the painful breathing, the feeble smile, the hectic

cough, and not wish the breathing less painful, the cough less frequent.

The comparative tranquillity of his mind had a wonderful effect upon his frame, and for two whole days, it almost seemed as if the natural vigour of his constitution would conquer. On the third, however, a violent fit of coughing caused the rupture of a blood-vessel, and there was no doubt but that a few hours must close his sad existence.

The effusion of blood could not be stopped. He gradually became weaker and weaker. As his strength declined, his tenderness towards Ellen increased, and all angry feelings vanished. From her hand alone would he receive either food or medicine. She watched over him with unwearied attention, and when at last his spirit quietly departed, so calmly, so gently, that the by-standers could scarcely ascertain the moment when he drew his last breath, it was her hand that closed his eyes, and she imprinted on his cold forehead, clammy with the dew of death, one pious kiss of duty and affection.

CONCLUSION.

Methinks if ye would know
How visitations of calamity
Affect the pious soul, 'tis shown ye there !
Look yonder at that cloud, which through the sky,
Sailing alone, doth cross in her career
The rolling moon ! I watch'd it as it came,
And dream'd the deep opake would blot her beams ;
But, melting as a wreath of snow, it hangs
In folds of wavy silver round, and clothes
The orb with richer beauties than her own,
Then passing, leaves her in her light serene.

SOUTHEY'S RODERICK.

ELLEN remained in the house till the last duties had been performed. The funeral of poor Cresford was conducted without pomp or show, and she then returned, with her restored George and Caroline, to her own cottage.

She put his children in the deepest mourning. For herself, she also wore deep mourning ; but she did not dress herself in weeds : she felt, under all the circumstances, that it would be a mockery.

She had not written to Algernon, to inform him of Cresford's death. She had felt a superstitious horror when his wedding-ring was committed to the flames; and the last parting scenes with Cresford had to her feelings sanctioned and confirmed anew her first union, so that at the moment when she was free to give herself for ever to Algernon, she felt herself more severed from him than she had ever yet done.

She knew not where he was; she had not allowed him to correspond with her; and though she felt it was scarcely kind not to be the first to inform him of the event, she had not courage to write to tell him she was free. She had never believed the rumours which had arisen from his frequent visits to Coverdale Park: she had been so sure of his devotion, that she would have felt guilty of ingratitude towards him, if she had allowed them to give her any uneasiness: yet now, for the first time, the recollection of the report would recur to her mind. It was possible, just possible, there might have been some foundation for it. She had heard, she had read a thousand times, that while there was hope, man might remain faithful; but that it was

woman, and woman only, who could live a life of hopeless devotion. She should have no right to complain, if he had at length looked elsewhere for domestic bliss. He would still have been true and kind to her, beyond what she had any right to expect.

As she did not write at first, from a feeling of delicacy towards the memory of Cresford, she now felt unwilling to do so from the shrinking sensitiveness which had always formed a leading feature in her character.

She was not long, however, kept in suspense. Algernon had been in Scotland at the time, and more than a week elapsed before he learned the event. He instantly returned to London. He there found that Ellen was at her cottage, and he followed as fast as four horses could carry him.

She was startled from a reverie of much hope, mixed with a little fear and wonder, by the clatter of a carriage at her door. Her heart leaped within her ; she doubted not who it was, and in two seconds she found herself pressed to Algernon's bosom.

She did not, this time, insist upon two years

of widowhood ; but consented, at the end of one month, to be privately re-married.

They agreed to renew those vows, to which their hearts had so strictly adhered, at Long-bury Church, and to Mr. Allenham's they speedily removed : Captain Wareham and Matilda followed, and Henry arrived from London.

It was late in the month of October. The party had gathered round a cheerful, blazing fire, on the evening preceding the ceremony. It was long since they had met together with feelings of peace and happiness, such as they now experienced, although in some of the party it was happiness chastened, and subdued, by all they had previously endured.

Algernon's eyes were fixed on Ellen with an expression of holy love, which bordered on veneration. Matilda remarked upon his steady gaze, and told him he would put Ellen quite out of countenance.

"I was thinking," he replied, "that if she had not been as virtuous, as she is beautiful, as pure as she is kind, as firm as she is affectionate, if she had listened to me, when I wished to fly to America, we should never have known this hour of unalloyed happiness."

"Well," answered the lively Matilda, "those thoughts were very respectful, and respectable thoughts. I cannot find any fault with them!"

Ellen smiled through the tears of virtuous gratification which Algernon's words had called forth.

"It is quite a comfort to see you smile, Ellen," said Caroline; "I thought I should never have seen those white teeth again! And when do you mean to curl your hair? I long to see your glossy black ringlets! Do not you, Mr. Hamilton? Do not you miss the ringlets very much?"

"I miss nothing!" replied Algernon; "Ellen is once more my Ellen. I have scarcely looked to see how she dressed herself."

"Now that is what I call true love," exclaimed Matilda; "Algernon does not look at Ellen's beauty. Ellen is Ellen, and that is enough for him. You all call me proud, and difficult, but when any man like Algernon, loves me as Algernon loves Ellen, then I will love him as Ellen loves Algernon."

"Do you give this as a proof you are not difficult, Matilda?" replied Ellen, smiling al-

most gaily : "there are not Algernons to be met with every day !"

"Then I will stay and take care of you, papa. You know you would not manage at all well without me ! you would have nobody to scold ! and what is more, there would be nobody to scold you," she added, playfully tapping her father on the cheek.

"I will tell you what, Matilda," replied Captain Wareham, who was too happy to be angry, "you must keep down this same spirit of your's, or nobody will put you to the trial."

Matilda looked archly at Caroline, as if Caroline and she, knew something that disproved Captain Wareham's prognostics.

The marriage was to take place early in the morning, as they meant to reach Belhanger the same day. The children had been already sent there, that they might be ready to greet them on their arrival.

Before eight o'clock, the whole party walked quietly up the hill to the church.

There Mr. Allenham again pronounced over them the nuptial benediction. They both repeated after him, clearly, distinctly, and fer-

vently, each word of their vow, and with a delightful, but sober certainty of waking bliss, of assured happiness, the small party wound their way down again to the parsonage.

It was a fine October morning, and the sun was quickly dispersing the vapours which still hung in the low grounds.

The valley had, half an hour before, appeared almost like a lake, as they looked down on the mist below. The trees, the spires, the knolls of higher ground were gradually emerging, and in a few minutes all was clear and joyous, dancing in the morning sunshine. The robin redbreast sung cheerily from the dewy hedges, which were still bright in their rich autumn livery.

"All Nature smiles upon us, Ellen," whispered Algernon: "So the clouds of our early life are dispersed! All before us is bright and serene."

THE END.

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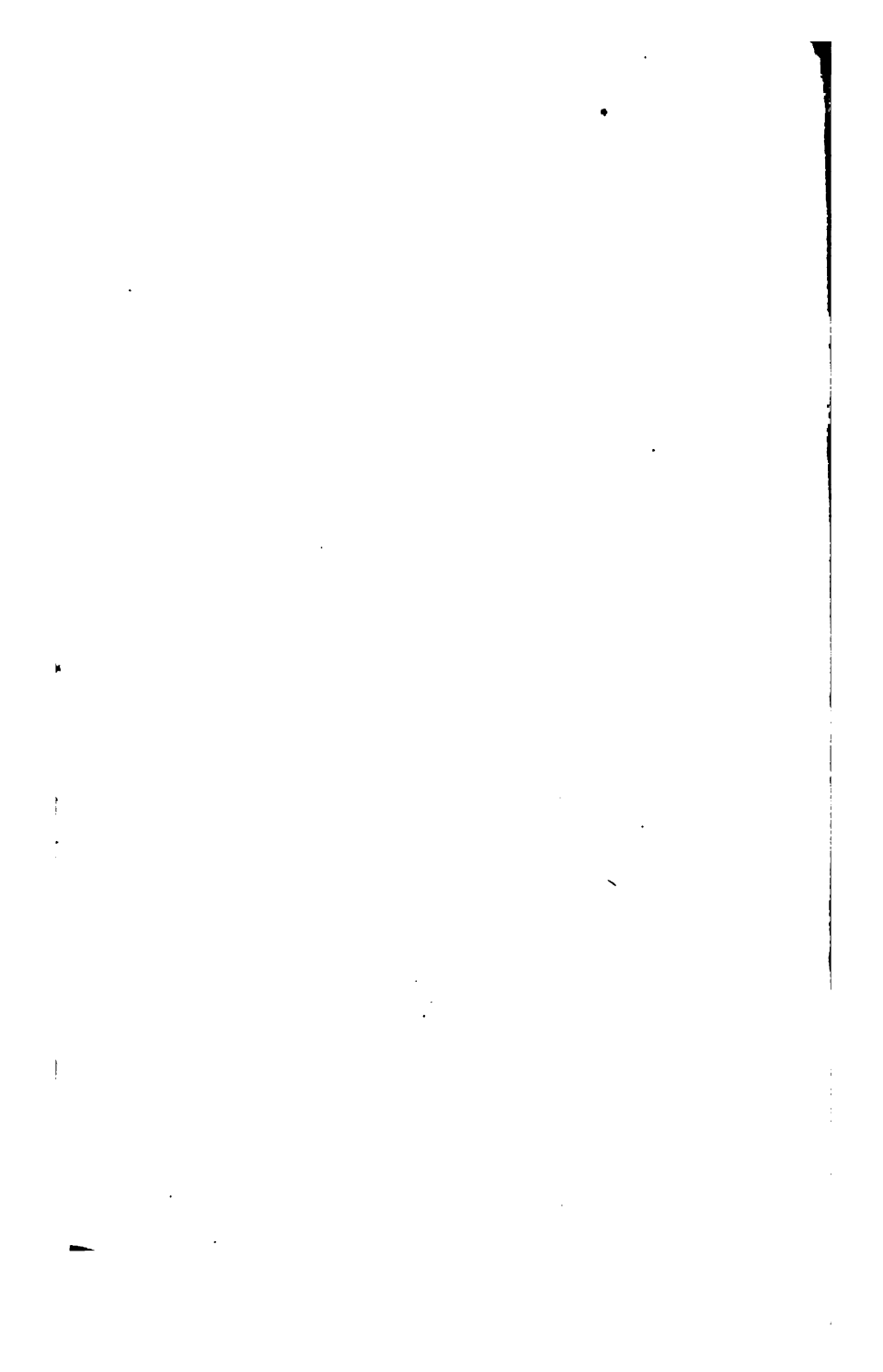
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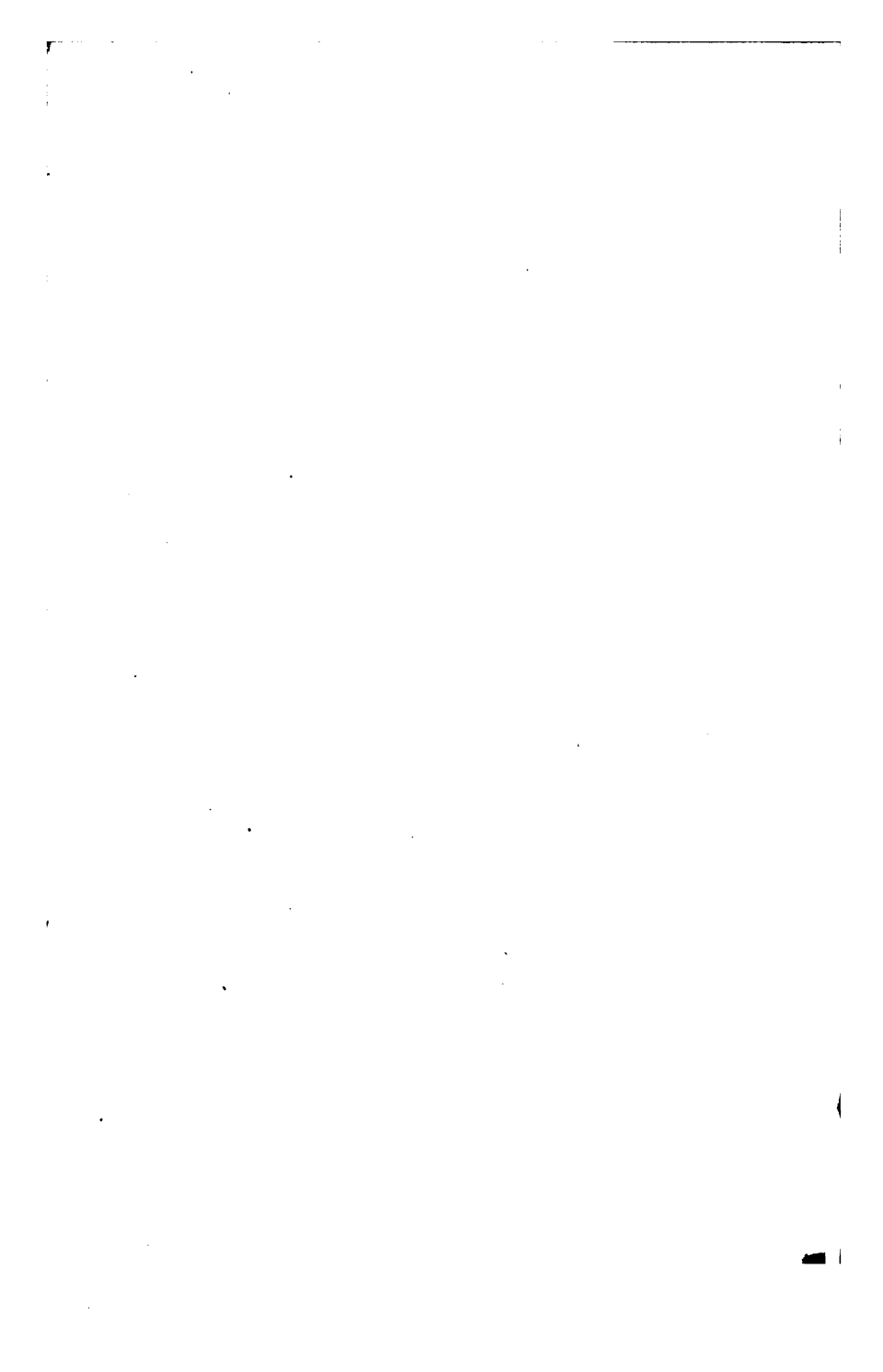
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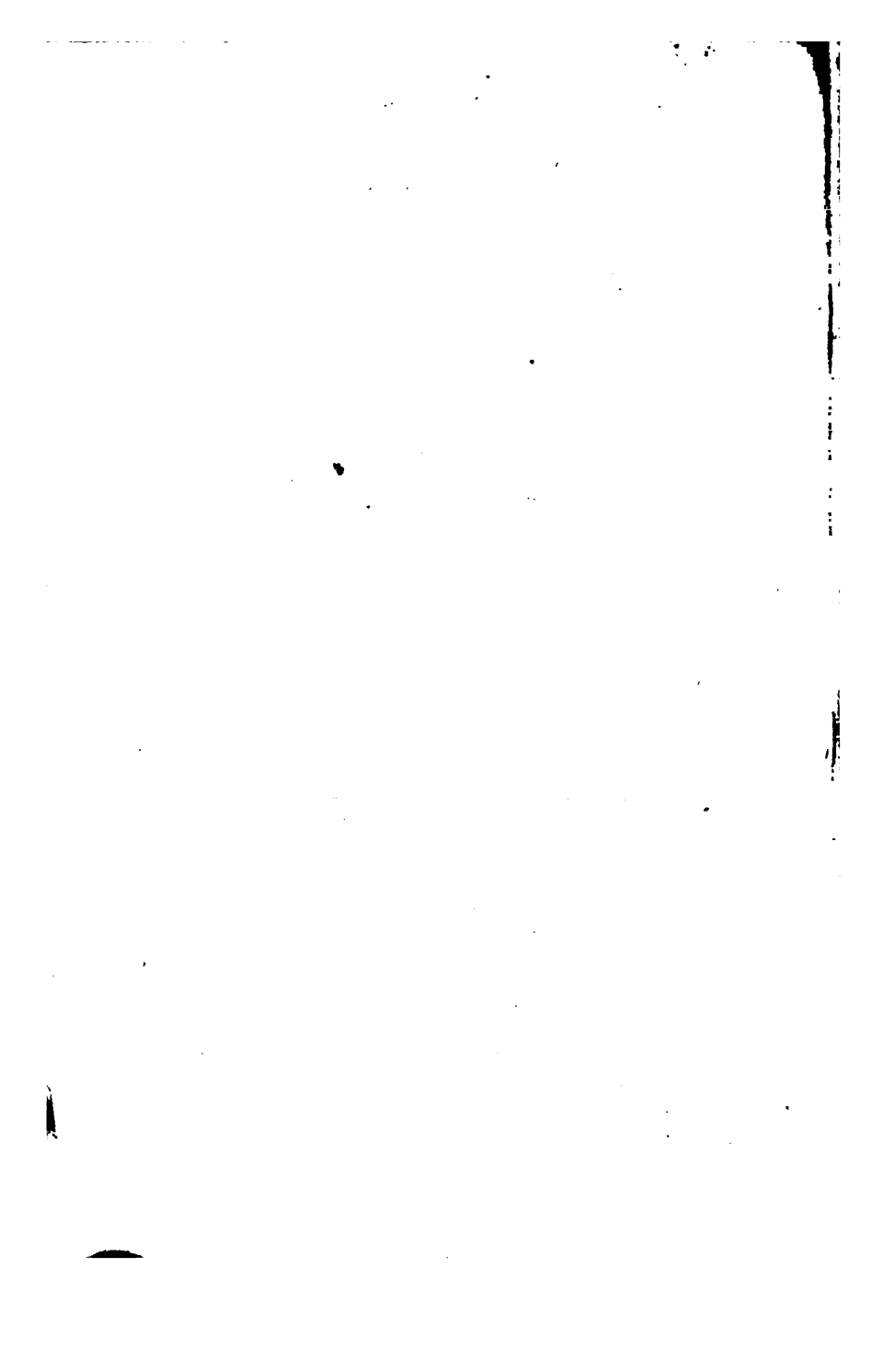
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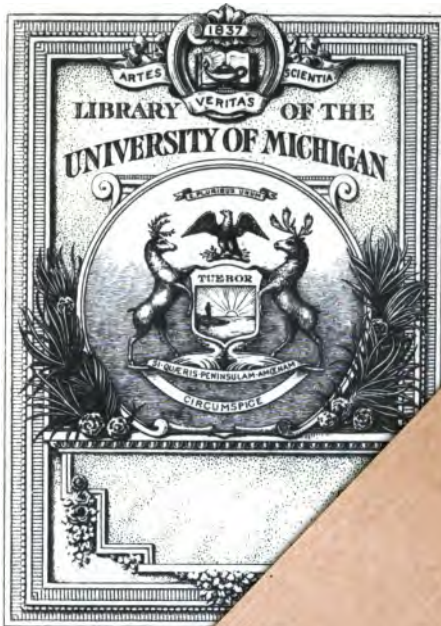
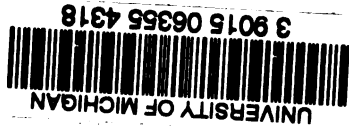
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